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NOVEMBER  
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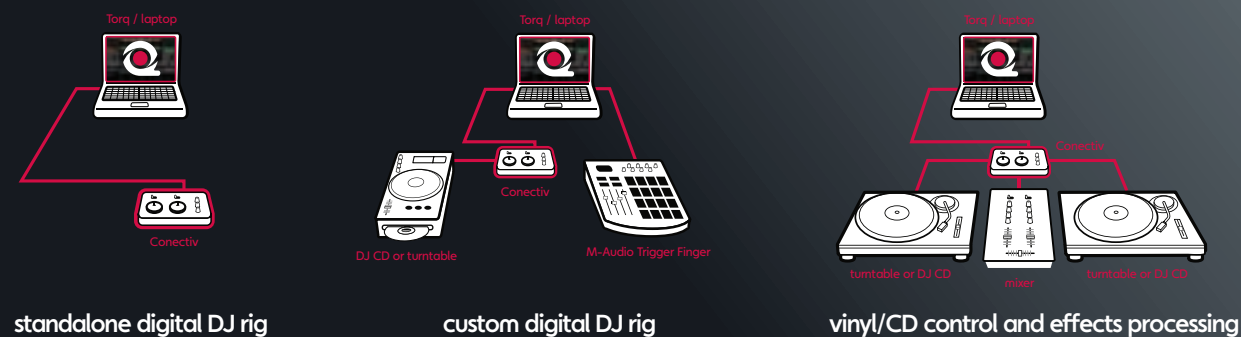
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Christopher Willis photographed in San Francisco by Paul O'Vallie

HOLIDAY HEROES  
🎁

STARRING MICHELLE YEOH





## ED'S RANT PROCESS THIS!



Ken Taylor ponders the Eyeglass Technology issue.

When I first put a call out to friends and colleagues for Music Technology-issue pitches, I never expected that a ranting reply from DJ SubCode would be the beacon that guided #102 through the murky darkness of the hard-to-process world of music processing. In response to my email (which asked friends for ideas on what's new and exciting in music tech), he wrote: "Everything is so blah... MP3, digital, *blah*. I'm on Mac OS9/Logic 6 and my plug-in diet is full of endless possibilities. I just got tired of looking for the newest, latest thing... My biggest complaint with articles about what's new and different is that it is so played."

I couldn't help but think, after culling through endless pitches from publicists and gear-marketing folks, that he was kind of right. Version upgrades, added features that simply double up on already-present key commands, the 112th different drum hit in the 150th new sample library: Could it get any nerdier? Or mentally cumbersome?

Truth is, no one with whom we spoke downloads *every* new driver, upgrade, or operating system. "If you feel comfortable with the setup, your performance will be better," offered Soulwax/2ManyDJs' David Dewaele. "All that [extra] stuff, if it takes away from the performance, then it's definitely not an improvement."

Even Asphodel's Naut Humon, who runs the tremendously forward-thinking studio/performance environment Recombinant Media Labs, concurs, "It's not the technology, it's the people behind it."

If anything, that's the resounding philosophy of this issue: not anti-tech, but rather tech-conscious. From Squarepusher's minimum-first approach to production to our 'How To' feature—which provides expertise on streamlining the sounds of your everyday environment—the key ingredient to mastering technology is getting your body and mind behind it. Pretty Zen, huh? Ghostly International artist Christopher Willits' lasting advice for guitar players? Free up your hands! Wanna rock the crowd with a killer DJ set? Most times, 20 great records will still take you further than an 80GB hard drive full of MP3s that you don't know.

I'll be the first to admit that, when it comes to gear and gadgetry, I'm still a greenhorn. And that learning curve, for anyone, is one tall mountain to scale. I'm lucky enough to have Willits as my occasional professor while I catch up on the countless computer-based editing, performing, and recording classes that I'm taking at the Bay Area Video Coalition. The premise of all the lessons, though, is that the basics are all the same, in the analog *or* digital worlds. If you wanna rock out, *you* gotta rock out. So don't sweat the Technics.

- Ken Taylor, Managing Editor

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### ON THE COVER

Squarepusher illustration by Typestereo (www.typestereo.com)



STARRING MICHELLE YEOH

HOLIDAY HEROES  
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## CONTRIBUTORS



### MONTY LUKE

Don't call this guy old-school; he hates it. A lover of strange games, funky people, and robot jokes, Brooklyn-born and L.A.-raised techno columnist Monty Luke has managed to make it to his 30s without being arrested or ordered by a court to pay child support. Let's face it, folks: that is a towering achievement in and of itself. Besides that, he can claim a short but very important speaking part in the now classic rave movie *Groove* as his brush with fame and fortune.



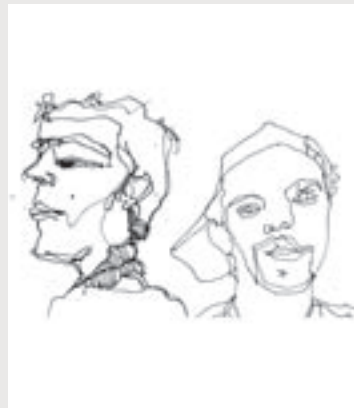
### RICHARD OKON

Richard Okon is a London-based photographer who specializes in portraits, music, and travel work. He has shot for numerous publications including *The Face*, *Arena*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Fader*, and has done work for Virgin and Mercury Records. His first book, on post-war prefab houses, was published in October by The Photographers' Gallery, London.



### BROCK PHILLIPS

From moshing with Aphex Twin in the cargo hold of a boat in Bristol to hopping milk-delivery trains out to Spiral Tribe raves in the Czech countryside, contributing writer Brock Phillips spent his formative years abroad before hobbling home with a mound of vinyl and a colossal hangover. He came into the *XLR8R* fold in 1999, and recently left a six-year stint as a music publicist for Warp, Ninja Tune, Domino, and others to embark upon his newest journey working in a pediatric ER.



### TYPESTEREO

TypeStereo started laying down ink in 1972. The design duo purchased its first IBM Selectric Composer typewriter the next spring, and in 1977, after a visit to the PARC research center in Palo Alto and the purchase of their first electrostatic/toner-based photocopier, something happened that changed TypeStereo forever. Simple reproduction techniques were modified in ways that caused some to label the new work "genius." Others simply called it "an atrocity." The duo's typographical and design atrocities grace this issue's cover and features.

[www.typestereo.com](http://www.typestereo.com)

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to [letters@xlr8r.com](mailto:letters@xlr8r.com) or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.



### Love on Haight

Y'all put out a tight mag. Just saw it in the bookstore tonight. Tight y'all! Peace!

*Macross, via XLR8R's MySpace page*

XLR8R,

Thanks for taking my money every month and giving so much back in return. You're getting the raw end of the deal.

*Al Ritchie, via XLR8R's MySpace page*

Just stumbled across your site...bloody amazing. You are making my tedious day job bearable.

Peace,  
*Ed from Crazy Robot Productions, UK, via email*

### Tip Fantastic

Hey XLR8Rs!

I have to say I really like all the nerdy gear talk in the back of mag, like the Hieroglyphic Being and Roots Tonic stuff ["In The Studio" and "Artist Tips," issue

#100]. I am using their gear ideas right now—in fact, I am hooking up a VCR to record my stuff all dirty sounding just like it says in the article! Is that a new thing? I might have to get a subscription if it stays this nerdy.

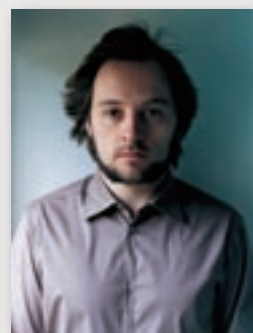
*Brett Burton, Brooklyn, NY*

### Vivian responds:

Glad you're putting our studio tips to use—that's what they're there for, and you'll find many more in this issue. "Artist Tips" is a newer feature, but we've been doing "In The Studio" for over three years (with artists including Pole, Madlib, and Coldcut). Soon, all these articles will all be archived at [www.xlr8r.com](http://www.xlr8r.com); read them all, and you will be a total studio wizard. (P.S. We've been this nerdy for years!)

### Corrections

In issue #100 "The Powers That Be," we incorrectly referred to ESPO wearing out his welcome with the "Brick City police force." Brick City actually refers to New Jersey, not ESPO's native Philly, where they call cops "pigs" like everyone else does.



## XLR8R'S "PUSH IT" CONTEST

Enter to Win a Music and Gear Package from M-Audio SynchroScience and Warp Records.

If there's one thing that everyone in our Music Technology special has in common, it's that they all embody the boundary-pushing spirit. Whether it's cover artist **Squarepusher** or gear makers **M-Audio** (whose **SynchroScience Connectiv/Torq** package gets high marks in this month's Machines reviews), **XLR8R** offers only the freshest and finest when it comes to blowing your mind.

Sure to take the digital DJing world by storm in the months to come, M-Audio's **SynchroScience** division brings you **Connectiv** and **Torq**, the latest weapons in their club-rockin' arsenal. Be the first on your block to cop this fantastic set, which puts you in control of all of your digital music with a killer hardware/software combination. On top of that, Sheffield, UK powerhouse Warp Records is going to bulk up that collection of yours with a heaping taste of Squarepusher's varied and brilliant back catalog. See the progression that Tom Jenkinson has made over the course of his decade-plus career while you bounce these tracks from side to side on that new Connectiv/Torq kit.

Tell us a tale of when you really pushed the envelope in less than 200 words. The best answer will win the prizes below.

**ONE GRAND PRIZE WINNER** will receive a SynchroScience Connectiv and Torq system, plus copies of Squarepusher's *Hello Everything*, *Ultravisitor*, *Go Plastic*, *Do You Know Squarepusher*, and *Burning'n Tree* on CD or LP.

**THREE RUNNERS UP** will receive a copy of Squarepusher's *Hello Everything* CD.

Entries will be accepted via snail mail and email. Entries must be received by November 28, 2006. Send your answers to **XLR8R's "Push It" Contest**, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "Push It Contest" in the subject line.

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# TIM HECKER

A Canadian sound sculptor creates magnificent structures of static and hum.

Words Robbie Mackey

Photo Carlos and Jason Sanchez ([www.thesanchezbrothers.com](http://www.thesanchezbrothers.com))

Give Tim Hecker 50 minutes.

Anything less is a waste, 'cause the Canadian sound artist—who was born in Vancouver, but resides in Montreal—ain't a three-chord rocker, and he's not a disco-edit DJ. Rather, Hecker is a careful craftsman with an interest in building *albums* instead of songs. From the cathedral preeminence of *Haunt Me, Haunt Me* to the lost-at-sea aimlessness of *Radio Amor*, Hecker takes care to service the whole, treating individual songs like organs in a body. As a result, the most memorable elements of any TH outing are the biggest: He trades in mammoth, album-spanning mood shifts, with changes masked by a pace as languid as that of glaciers melting.

But we've learned to wait on Hecker. He changes character gradually with each record rather than hopping between genres. His latest release—a familiar-sounding, 15-track record entitled *Harmony in Ultraviolet*—works the same subtle dynamics. "There's quite a trajectory over the 50 minutes: between different movements, between really mellow, traditional ambient pieces and kind of neo-Boredoms electronic metal insanity," says Hecker.

These shifts are as gradual as growing grass, but don't call his technique staid. "[Artists] always [have] this desire to do different things, but there's often little respect for craft or developing a voice," he says. "That can take a long time; that can be slow over different records. I kind of reject the need to be different."

Indeed, Hecker just gets better at his own brand of beauty, one that champions opposing poles—or, more accurately, bends them until they touch. His music comes across in waves, slowly ebbing between restless motion and static force, between painful noise and calming melody. It's these crosshatched moments where his pieces become most rewarding: when a mangled piano line wanders into the heart of an unwieldy swell, when a warm wash boils up into scalding steam and all that's left is the physicality of the sound.

"Sometimes when I listen to something with a really interesting chord structure from a rock band, it totally underwhelms me," he confesses. "Sometimes [it's] pretty pansy or pretty weak in terms of its power. But then I listen to someone like Merzbow and find it just as dissatisfying because there's a total absence of tonal qualities. Melody gives a kind of redemption, a sort of power. It's so effective with noise."

*Harmony in Ultraviolet* is out now on Kranky. [www.kranky.net](http://www.kranky.net)





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|| PREFIX ||



**GOOD STUFF**

A few of Gary Benzel's favorite things.

Gary Benzel resides in warm, sunny, sleepy San Diego, and you can feel the city's influence on his design work, which pairs a soothing color palette and nature-inspired themes (woodgrain, palm trees) with a clean, pared-down feel. Benzel is best known for his work with best friend Todd St. John—in 1994, the pair created the clothing line Green Lady, and a few years later launched HunterGatherer (abbreviated HUGA) as an outlet for commercial creative work for the likes of Nike, MTV, and t-shirt brands UARM and 2K. In 2002, Benzel launched the Igloo Store (640 W. Beech St. #1A, San Diego) to bring extreme SoCal-ers a taste of cutting-edge art and design. Benzel had just gotten back from bird watching when we asked him for his favorite items of the moment. *Vivian Host*  
www.greenlady.com, www.huntergatherer.com, www.igloostore.com

**1. COMMONWEALTH STACKS X MARC JACOBS X ARKITIP CARD DECK (\$9.50)**

Michael and Laura Leon of Stacks make playing card games interesting again with this Skull Series card deck. The deck presents a great opportunity for cheating (although it requires some memorization), as the back of every card features a different image. Released originally with *Arkitip* #27.  
www.commonwealthstacks.com

**2. ARKITIP 35 FEATURING C.R. STECYK (\$30)**

This issue honors the work of Craig Stecyk, one of the primary pioneers of the visual culture that emerged from the early surf and skate movements. The magazine is poly-bagged with *Futuropolis*, a publication of Stecyk's writing and photographs, and a disposable camera in the *Arkitip* style (they're having an artist customize a gift object each issue).  
www.arkitip.com

**3. HAND ON STRING (\$18)**

This CD of music by guitarist and vocalist Mike Andrews comes with an elaborate CD art and an illustrated book, both by Geoff McFetridge. The tunes are enjoyable and folksy, and the watercolor-style illustrated companion piece makes the listening a true A/V experience.  
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Annuals (from left): Zack Oden, Anna Spence, Adam Baker, Mike Robinson, Nick Radford, and Kenny Florence

# ANNUALS

North Carolina normals deliver compelling, exotic indie pop.

Words Robbie Mackey Photo Ken Valan

The Panera Bread Company in downtown Chapel Hill, NC is filled with a bunch of average Joes hunched over pricey sandwiches. Picking at chips and sipping cups of soup, no one in the joint bats an eyelash at recent Ace Fu signees Annuals, who've seated themselves at a big table by the entrance. This air of indifference has nothing to do with Panera's generally square patronage, or even the fact that Annuals are far from famous. Rather, its members blend in pretty convincingly with the clientele.

The six members of Raleigh, North Carolina's Annuals aren't cowboy-shirted hipsters, or aloof New York post-grads; not what you'd expect from a band currently scaling the cool-kid ranks and pulling paragraphs from heavyweight critics. And even though their strange, wide-eyed songs might suggest otherwise, Annuals are some of the most normal kids in indie rock. Nonetheless, the band delivers just

what the blogosphere has been waiting for—exotic, experimental rock made by people too genuine and young (average age: 20) to call pretentious.

"We're so tired of waiting," bassist Mike Robinson says of the impending release of his band's debut album, *Be He Me*. "Everything we've done has built up to this since we were kids. We're coming up on a decade of playing together, and finally it's happening."

It was 1999 when Robinson, Kenny Florence, and Adam Baker—then middle-schoolers—formed their first band, playing meaty punk rock songs for crowds of their friends. But everything changed when the trio met Zach Oden, an adventurous percussionist and music appreciator, whose influence compelled them to trade in Blink 182 riffs for Mike Patton-esque sonic weirdness.

"Basically, we were sick and tired of rock 'n' roll music," says Baker, who initially helmed the

Annuals project on his own. "The biggest thing for me was meeting Zach, who brought all this great music to the table that we had never heard."

Throughout *Be He Me*, just what was brought to the table becomes clear: kaleidoscopic pop experimentalism. Album opener "Brother" travels through an enchanted forest only to break into a clearing filled with propulsive, percussion-led stomp. From the Latin funk of "Carry Around" to the glitchy zip of "Ida, My," Annuals borrows the prettiest and strangest elements of Flaming Lips' psych-rock and Animal Collective's fairy-dust jamborees.

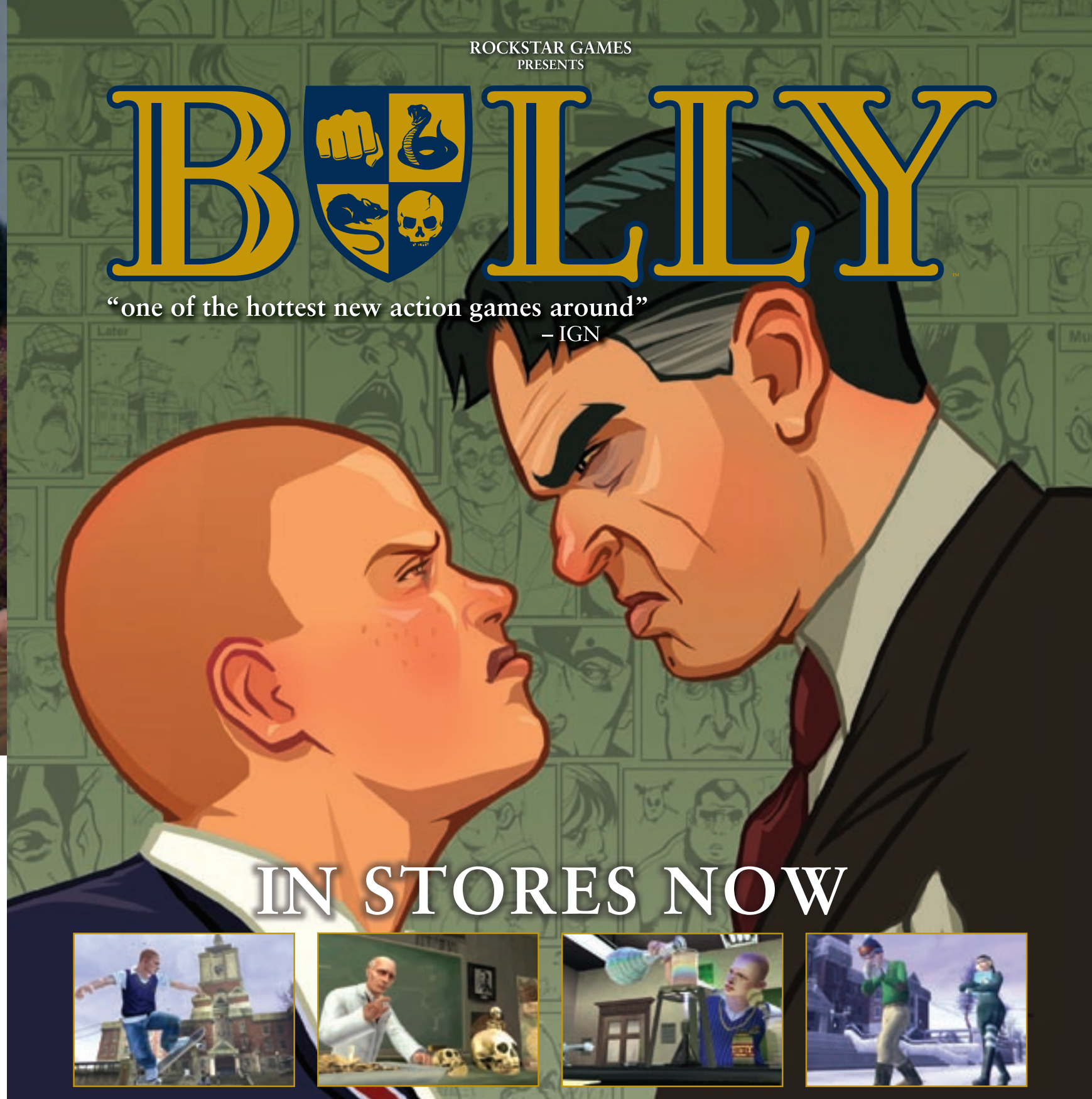
But Annuals sees the world through bright and happy (not bloodshot) eyes, remaining ever mindful of their songs' pop backbones. This is where the band truly succeeds: being memorable and catchy in the strangest of ways, but normal at the same time.

*Be He Me* is out now on Ace Fu. [www.acefu.com](http://www.acefu.com)

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## GEARED UP

XLR8R's Brandon Ivers gets wired at the country's best independent gear shops.



Nova Musik

### NOVA MUSIK

608 N Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202  
(414) 270-1948

Tony 'Tone' Gral has operated downtown Milwaukee's Nova Musik since 1999. Boasting a staff knowledgeable in fine beer and synthesizer customization, you can find everything from Nova's modded Moog and Studio Electronic synths to all the usual suspects from Nord, Roland, and Yamaha.

**What are people getting most excited about in the store?** The custom synths we're doing. The Moog Solar, or stuff like the Studio Electronics 'Code,' which is an Omega 8 with a redesigned front panel and a new external-input filter control section.

**What do you think of the major chains?** Guitar Center, Sam Ash, all those guys—they do a lot of advertising. It just gets more people interested in gear, which, in turn, leads them to other places.  
[www.novamusik.com](http://www.novamusik.com)

### ROBOTSPEAK

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After recognizing the initial seeds of a burgeoning lap-top musician culture, owners Steve Taormina and Alan Stewart formed Robotspeak with maxed-out credit cards in 2002. On top of being both incredibly knowledgeable and kind, they also match Guitar Center's prices.

**How do you feel about customers sitting for hours on your gear?** We allow 59 minutes of complimentary playtime, at which point we break out the baseball bats—a full-sized aluminum Louisville Slugger and a smaller aluminum tee-ball bat we lovingly refer to as "Little Louie."

**What's the staff's favorite piece of gear?**

The Dave Smith Instruments' Mono Evolver Keyboard, a half-analog and half-digital synth that will kill you with kindness, then kick you in the trachea.  
[www.robotspeak.com](http://www.robotspeak.com)

### BIG CITY MUSIC

11106 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, CA 91604  
(818) 985-0855

Roger Cordell opened Big City Music in 1996 after interest in his analog synth stockpile cooled in Japan, but reheated in the United States. Big City offers tons of new and used hard-to-find synths and effects, and no one else has a better selection of unusual filters and processors.

**Any staff favorites?** Analogue Systems has a Bode Frequency Shifter that is spectacular.

**Most obscure item for sale:** PPG Realizer... or the PPG Waveterm

**Is analog really better sounding?** Is a gourmet meal better than a frozen dinner? If anyone has any doubts about how good new analog gear is, it's only because they haven't tried it yet.  
[www.bigcitymusic.com](http://www.bigcitymusic.com)



Robotspeak



Big City Music



Needle Doctor

### NEEDLE DOCTOR

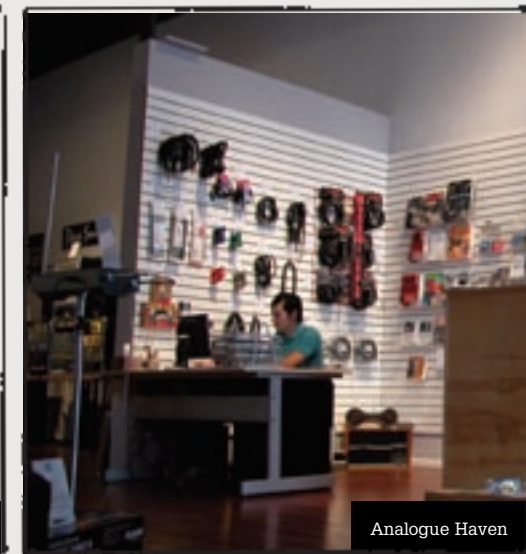
419 14th Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414  
(612) 378-0543

Founded in 1979 after owner Jerry Raskins found runaway success selling blank cassettes out of his backpack, Needle Doctor has grown to become a worldwide DJ/audiophile institution. If you can't find the right needle or cartridge here, it probably doesn't exist.

**Any staff favorites?** The JA Michell GyroDec. It's a turntable.

**Famous clients?** Carl Craig, John Vanderslice, Kirsty Hume.

**Anything for the wealthy battle DJs out there?** We have a DJ cartridge that retails for \$995 by Decca.  
[www.needledoctor.com](http://www.needledoctor.com)



Analogue Haven

### ANALOGUE HAVEN

252 S Main St. #A, Pomona, CA 91766  
(909) 622-2995

Analogue Haven's storefront opened in May of 2005, and stands alone as the only shop specifically dedicated to analog synthesis. The best place to go if you're looking to build a custom modular synth.

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**What's the appeal behind modular synthesizers?** Modular gear embodies the best parts of analog: amazing sound, infinitely flexible, and total hands-on control. Everything is small, handmade, and crafted to interconnect. We think it changes the way you approach music.  
[www.analoguehaven.com](http://www.analoguehaven.com)



Rogue Music

### ROGUE MUSIC

251 W 30th St. #10FE, New York, NY 10001  
(212) 629-5073

In the early '80s, Dick Michaels tried to get rid of a Prophet 5 keyboard. Unable to score cash, he instead landed a bass, a guitar, and a tape deck, beginning a cycle of trading that led to opening Rogue. Twenty-three years later, more used music gear is sold and repaired here than anywhere else in the world.

**Most popular product?** It's a toss up between MPC drum machines and a varying selection of keyboards.

**Rarest keyboard in stock?** Currently, the Yamaha CS-10.

**We hear a lot of famous musicians have been through the store...** Michael Jackson, David Bowie, Grandmaster Flash, and Ol' Dirty Bastard, among others.  
[www.roguemusic.com](http://www.roguemusic.com)



# PROFESSOR MURDER

A NY band reps the transit system.

Words Jesse Serwer Photo Dustin Ross

"There's a certain sound or aesthetic that people associate with being a 'New York band,'" notes Mike Bell-Smith, lead vocalist and percussionist for five-borough denizens Professor Murder. "We don't necessarily fit into that whole Velvet Underground/Ramones/Strokes lineage, but what we're doing is a product of living in New York. [It's] the whole idea of seeing a million people everyday in this crazy place and walking through neighborhoods with a million types of people, and how that affects your psyche."

Bell-Smith's assertions are reinforced by the band's cheeky publicity photos, which find the four members clad in "I [Heart] NY" t-shirts. The cover art to their debut EP, *Professor Murder Rides the Subway* (Kanine), is a cartoonish (yet dead-on) caricature of a crowded subway car occupied by hipsters, hobos, and a Hasid.

But what's most "New York" about P-Murder—who take their name from a skit on the late-'90s comedy show, *Mr. Show*—is how the band effortlessly incorporates the hip-hop- and dancehall-dominated sound

of the NYC streets into their punk rock aesthetic, much in the way Gang of Four, PiL, and The Clash freaked funk and dub 25 years ago. While other so-called "post-punk" acts are still squeezing the last juices out of *Entertainment!*, *Second Edition*, and *Sandinista!*, *Rides The Subway* finds Bell-Smith chanting "Rah! Rah!" ("Champion") and referencing rapper Cam'ron's obsession with color ("Cam'ron's New Color Pt. 3"), while he and his instrument-switching bandmates accentuate their percussive, bass-heavy sound with timbales, cowbells, melodicas, and blaring air horns. The group has also been known to drop instruments altogether—under the name King Oppression, they rock house parties by performing acapellas of their songs over dancehall riddims like Coolie Dance and hip-hop instrumentals like that of Lil' Kim's "Lighters Up."

While the CD release of *Rides The Subway* this summer has given P-Murder (as the group members refer to themselves) "it band" status, their non-

careerist approach to their future is refreshing. The group will soon release an extended version of their EP on vinyl—featuring reinterpretations of their work by a diverse group of remixers including Tigerbeat 6's Stars As Eyes, ragga jungle producer Murderbot, hip-hop DJs Caps and Jones, and fellow Kanine Records act Mixel Pixel—but they don't have a full-length LP or even a national tour in the works at the moment.

"If you go to a job everyday, you have to do things you might not want to do, or present yourself in a certain way," says Jesse Cohen, the group's keyboard- and electronic-drum manipulator. "Music is one part of our lives where we really want to feel like we're honest, and do the things we want because we can, and it's ours. None of us [is] super-hungry; now that we have a little press, we [don't] feel we have to push it to the next level because that's 'what you have to do.'"

*Professor Murder Rides The Subway* is out now on Kanine Records. [www.professormurder.com](http://www.professormurder.com), [www.kaninerecords.com](http://www.kaninerecords.com)



Professor Murder (from left): Jesse Cohen, Andy Craven, Michael Bell-Smith, and Tony Plunkett



Atlanta opening in early 2007.

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# Tomorrow, Today

XLR8R scouted out the MAGIC, Pool, and Project clothing tradeshows in August to bring you a preview of what's coming up in Spring 2007. Bold, all-over graphics, teal and purple, and much '80s nostalgia dominated. Have a look for yourself!  
www.magiconline.com, www.pooltradeshows.com, www.projectshow.com

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DC Shoes, www.dcsneakers.com



Quiliver DPM by Futura, www.quiliver.com



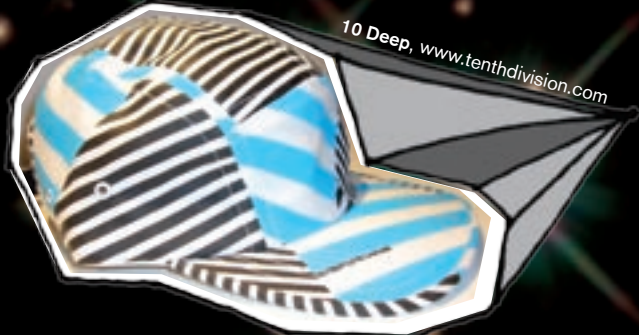
Hysteric Glamour, www.hystericglamour.com



Mishka, www.mishkanyc.com



10 Deep, www.tenthdivision.com



Paul Frank shirts and reversible underwear, www.paulfrank.com



Boxfresh, www.boxfresh.co.uk



Syndrome, www.syndrome.us



Etnies Plus, www.etniesplus.com



55DSL, www.55dsl.com



8020, www.eightytwenty.com



Converse, www.converse.com



Triko, www.triko.com



Imaginary Foundation, www.imaginaryfoundation.com



Le Tigre, www.letigreusa.com



WASC, www.wasc.com



Fifty2ASF, www.upperplayground.com



House33, www.house33.com



Edoc Laundry, www.edoclaundry.com



Fila, www.fila.com







The heavily-sampled "Apache" break originated on Incredible Bongo Band's *Bongo Rock* LP.

### APACHE THIS

A short history of hip-hop's longest-running break.

The list of artists who have sampled Incredible Bongo Band's "Apache" reads like a history of modern music: the Sugarhill Gang ("Apache"), Goldie ("Inner City Life"), Future Sound of London ("We Have Explosive"), and Massive Attack ("Angel"); Adidas even used a version in its 2006 World Cup ads. Bongo Band bandleader Michael Viner says identifying his favorite use of the sample "is like choosing [his] favorite child."

In 1972, Viner was residing in L.A., making music for MGM subsidiary American International Pictures (responsible for such low-budget movies as Peter Fonda's psychedelic *The Trip*). After shooting *The Thing With Two Heads*—a movie whose tag line was "They transplanted a white bigot's head on a soul brother's body!"—Viner was given a whole session to record high-octane chase scene music for the soundtrack. The tracks he made (with a crew that came to be known as the Incredible Bongo Band) were released on a 1973 record called *Bongo Rock* (Pride). Among them is "Apache," a cover of British band The Shadows' 1960 single, whose extended series of echoing beats and drum solos proved to be a hip-hop goldmine. In the mid-'70s, DJ Kool Herc started mixing the breaks into his sets, beginning decades of authorized and unauthorized sampling.

"I'm glad it's got the status it has," says Viner. "But I'm sad I haven't had reasonable compensation, so it's a mixed feeling. We find new places it's been sampled virtually every day of the week." Viner—whose career highlights include production on over 2,000 audio books and a stint as Charles Bronson's manager—now handles all the rights to the Bongo Band's catalog. The first artist to officially ask to sample "Apache" was Nas, and subsequent users have paid between \$10,000-\$50,000 for short clips of the song. Mash-up hooligans beware: the penalty for using the track without permission is a hefty \$25,000. *Patrick Sisson*

## You BETTA ASK SOMEBODY

XLR8R asks "What is your favorite piece of technology?"



### ROB CORRADETTI FROM MIXEL PIXEL

"Nintendo DS Lite. During long car rides on tour, there's nothing like playing a few rounds of *Mario Kart* versus the rest of the band. Even Matty, our steady driver, has to give up the wheel for a little Yoshi, Peach, and Bowser three-way action." Mixel Pixel's *Music For Plants* (Kanine) is out now. [www.mixelpixel.com](http://www.mixelpixel.com), [www.kaninerecords.com](http://www.kaninerecords.com)



### DOSEONE OF SUBTLE

"The fork. Both the knife and spoon are prehistoric human inventions, but the fork was not so lucky. The most modern addition to the triumvirate of western cutlery first emerged in Italy during the 12th century. In 1630, John Winthrop brought the fork to the USA, and the rest is history—one of quickened consumption and senseless appetite." Subtle's *For Hero for Fool* (Astralwerks) is out now. [www.subtle6.com](http://www.subtle6.com), [www.astralwerks.com](http://www.astralwerks.com)



### WARREN HUEGEL FROM TUSSLE

"Sonograms. Holy shit! I recently watched a five-minute video of my friend Colin's yet-to-be-born son, and it was jaw-dropping. Getting to watch the movements and development of a fetus is pretty darn incredible." Tussle's *Telescope Mind* (Smalltown Supersound) is out now. [www.tussle.org](http://www.tussle.org), [www.smalltownsupersound.com](http://www.smalltownsupersound.com)

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LUTAN FYAH

A champion footballer turns Bobo Rasta and reggae ambassador.

Words Tomas Palermo Illustration Drew Heffron (www.dreweffron.com)

Jamaican singer Lutan Fyah has a reputation for succinct, spiritually charged language, which lifts the artist (born Anthony Martin) above the pack of just-arrived cultural reggae singers. His third album, *Phantom War* (Greensleeves), is populated by rich, memorable songs, all imbued with forthright Rasta ethics.

Martin's strength and piousness are partially the result of tests he endured as a player in Jamaica's Premier League football association. Coaches were outright hostile when the talented midfielder would not trim his locks. As a result, Martin left football in 1996 for musical pursuits. He recorded his first material at Buju Banton's Gargamel Studios before collaborating and touring with Jah Mason and linking up with Bay Area producers Lustre Kings for his 2005 album, *Time and Place*.

When I reach Martin on his mobile phone in Jamaica, he's bouncing down a potholed road en route to his new Tsahai Music studio head-

quarters. He's keen to explain the inspiration for *Phantom War*: "[The album] means that I-and-I can come across with a message of Rastafari so people can understand Lutan Fyah on a different level. [I-and-I] choose to teach the youth dem about the ghetto runnings in Jamaica and worldwide. The album speaks of how we go about our day-to-day lives."

Primarily a collection of tracks on recent modern roots riddims like Black Shade, Blaze, and Triumphant, *Phantom War* maintains a cohesive vibe borne of its conscious messages. Songs like "Mother Earth's Healing" and "Screaming For The Poor" underscore Martin's moral convictions. "We're living in a *shituation* where anything can happen," he remarks, "and the community have to be uplifted for the youth to see a better way. The children of the ghetto should get better education; governments of the world should find a way to let them get it free, or at least affordable."

Martin literally wears his message on his

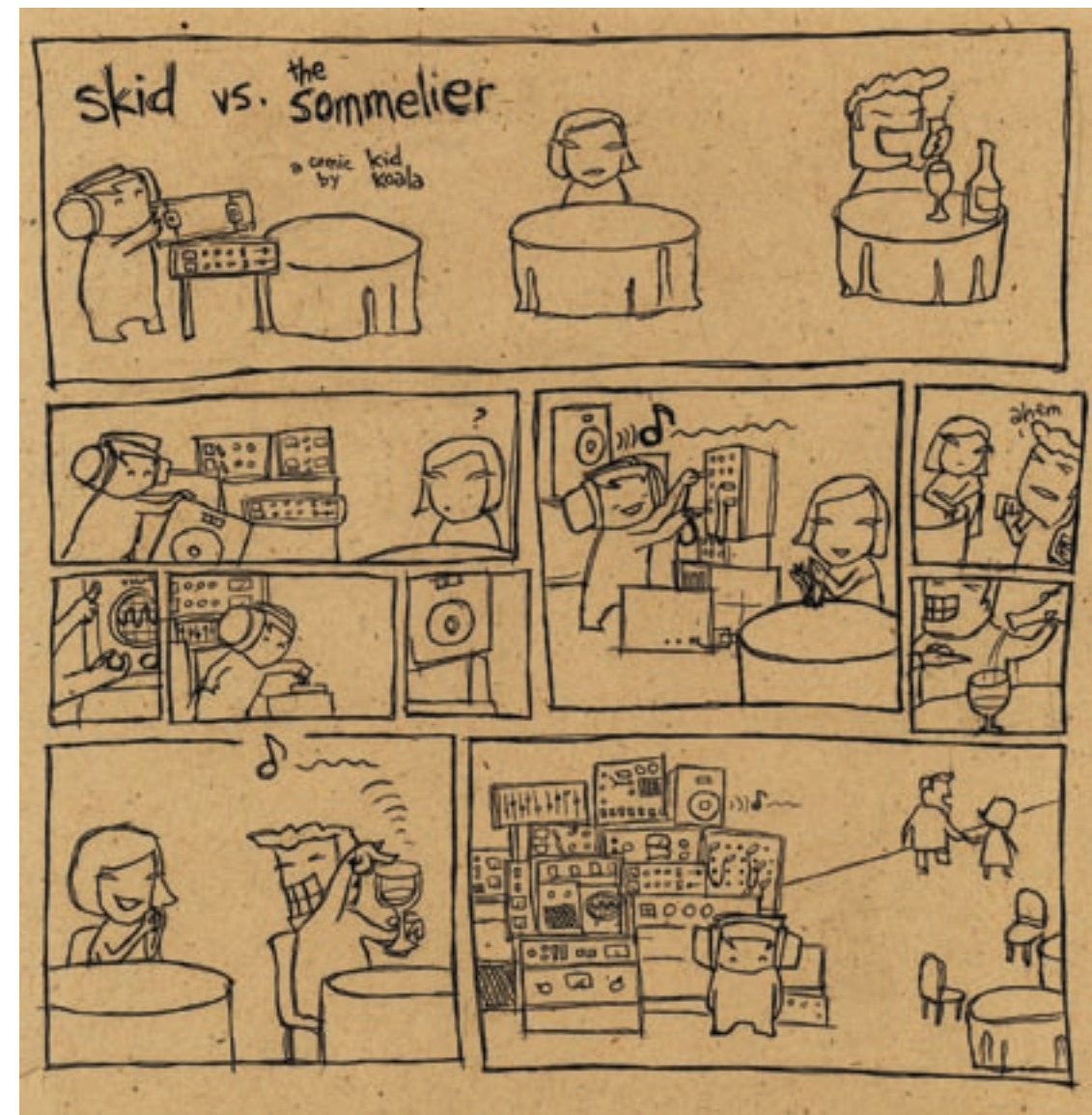
sleeves. Adorning the singer's crisp khaki suit are Rastafarian icons and medallions, including a large letter R and number 7. "I-and-I a Bobo Ashanti," he explains. "The 'R' stands for the righteousness government; we don't deal with the 'X' government. [Ours is] a theocratic government with which we can reach out to the people of the world. We say Haile Selassie [unleashed] the seven seals, the seven elements of creation, which manifest on a spiritual level through humankind. When you see the people stand up for their own self and them a' own opinion, it's 'cause Haile Selassie manifest the seventh seal."

As we conclude our interview, Martin breaks into a spontaneous five-minute acapella verse. His spiritual message is as unwavering as his voice is clear, underscoring the point that music is this artist's form of activism. "We try and declare ourselves through music cause music is what we have," he says. "We got nothing else."

www.lutanfyah.com, www.greensleeves.net

## SKID VS. THE SOMMELIER

Kid Koala draws us a digital versus analog love story.



## A BIT SKETCHY

A hefty "biography" chronicles the life and times of cartoon band Gorillaz.

It's no longer enough to be just a band. Marketing geniuses have taken the music business to complex, consumptive heights: rappers make feature films, actors make pop albums, musicians host reality TV shows. Blur's Damon Albarn invented a slightly more niche-y, but no less brilliantly capitalist, cross-promotion for his sensationally successful cartoon band, Gorillaz. *Rise of the Ogre* (Penguin; hardcover, \$35) is the group's faux biography, cobbled together documentary-style through "interviews" with friends and family. Illustrated by Jamie Hewlett—the visual wizard behind this curtain—*Ogre* casts its

net wide, but ultimately will appeal to those with a twisted sense of humor and fans of graphic novels (think Hewlett's *Tank Girl* or Asaf and Tomer Hanuka's *Bipolar*). If you feel the Gorillaz characters "come alive" through Albarn's music or Hewlett's cartoons, you'll buy into this novel's pitch; if not, you probably couldn't care less about how 2D's hair turned blue (he fell out of a tree as a child) or what homoerotic cover bands Murdoc founded before joining Albarn's crew (The Burning Sensations and Motley Dude, to name a few). *Stacey Dugan* www.gorillaz.com







JUGGAKNOTS

A trio of siblings emerges from the classroom to school the masses.  
 Words Max Herman Photo Amalgam Digital, Inc.

Before sitting down to record their new album *Use Your Confusion*, Bronx hip-hop trio Juggaknots hadn't recorded a sizeable amount of material together in five or six years. For a group of siblings all living in the same area, this lengthy absence doesn't initially add up—that is, until you find out what they've been doing with their time. While on hiatus from hip-hop, brothers Breeze Brewin and Buddy Slim and sister Queen Herawin were busy dropping science, almost literally, in the classroom.

"Teaching is a tough gig and it ain't really the kind of thing you can slack on 'cause you're dealing with people's lives—you wanna give it your all," says Breeze of the trio's shared profession, which has also brought them closer together. "We can sit down and bond and relate to each other [about teaching]," says Herawin.

While it's been a decade since the Juggaknots' debut, *Clear Blue Skies*, and three years since its revamped re-release, this trio hasn't been entirely absent from hip-hop. Collaborations with Prince Paul, Mr. Len, and The

Weathermen have kept Breeze and his siblings' names bubbling in the underground. "We tried to put out a single here and there just to let cats know that there was still a pulse," Breeze explains. "Although [our pulse] was near flat-lining, it never got completely horizontal."

*Use Your Confusion* shows that Juggaknots are indeed alive and kicking, with the threesome presenting challenging subject matter over a multifaceted supply of gritty, mid-tempo beats. Though rhymes about the importance of fathers in the inner city and growing older may sound dry or didactic, the crew breathes life and positivity into the topics, while sharing their own experiences. On "Daddy's Little Girl," Queen Herawin reveals how having her father consistently present as a child was vital to her upbringing; on "30 Something," Breeze reflects with guest MC Sadat X on how inching closer towards middle age isn't half bad.

Juggaknots aren't all about introspection, though. Tracks like "Use Your Confusion" touch on broader human themes—in particular, the uncertainty that the public is feeling these days and what can be done to remedy social and political situations. Breeze explains the song—and the overall album—thusly: "It's really about using that frustration and just basically pokin' fun at it and using it to your benefit."

*Use Your Confusion* (Amalgam/Matic) is out now. [www.amalgamdigital.com](http://www.amalgamdigital.com)

Juggaknots (from left): Queen Herawin, B-Slim, and Breeze Brewin



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## GIMME SOME MORO

A Finnish director explores the indigenous sounds of Brazil.

It was the acoustic sounds of bossa nova that first lured Mika Kaurismäki to Brazilian music in the 1970s, but that soon fishtailed into a love for indigenous sounds. In 1989, Kaurismäki began splitting his time between his native Finland and Rio de Janeiro, and embarked on a career as a sonic muse. The outcome is *Moro No Brasil* (Milan Entertainment, \$19.99), a low-budget (yet highly passionate) documentary that finds Kaurismäki exploring the music of Brazil's indigenous cultures. Originally released in 2002 (but recently available on DVD), the film has a spontaneous, visually primitive feel—armed with only a handheld camera, the tall, blond explorer documented himself in the midst of regional folk heroes, trading tales of nostalgia and futurism with them in Portuguese. Raw, live performances with *forro* maestro Jacinto Silva and the brilliant *sambista* Seu Jorge create magical moments rarely seen in more polished exports, and the DVD also covers obscure genres such as *maracatu*, *embolada*, and *frevo*. Leave it to a Finn to create such a dusty, beautiful snapshot of South America's musical legacy. *Derek Beres*

[www.moronobrasil.com](http://www.moronobrasil.com)

## CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

Bit pushers invade New York during the Blip Festival.

If hearing the *Castlevania* theme song remixed in the style of *MegaMan* is enough to get your joystick jumping, then hightail it to New York City's Blip Festival (December 1-3). Nerds and n00bs alike will find something to appreciate at this three-day event, where a cast of international 8-bit artists will rip the guts out of old game consoles in the name of creative expression. Artists on the bill range from stateside scene leaders Bit Shifter and Nullsleep (whose wicked Game Boy cover of Depeche Mode works hard for the term "megamix") to the insanely cute three-piece Japanese pop band YMCK. Throw in workshops about reverse engineering on NES cartridges and pixelated art installations—including Corey Arcangel's "Super Mario Movie"—and you have a proper congregation of art-minded geeks. "I'm not gonna lie. [Our audience] is a lot of dorky guys who look like they'll soon be returning to their parents' basement," admits Mike Rosenthal, the festival's artistic director. "But it's fun! They want to hear shit that makes them groove, but they want to know something techy is going into it." Rosenthal, who runs a packed chiptune monthly at all-performance space The Tank, attributes the scene's growing popularity to his generation's shared pop-culture nostalgia. "People grew up immersed in this stuff—that 8-bit, blippy sound speaks to them on a deep level. It's taking back a pure and total part of our childhood, and turning it into something crazy and new." *Anna Balkrishna*

[www.blipfestival.org](http://www.blipfestival.org)



Bit Shifter (Photo by Joshua Weiner)



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**SPIN CYCLE**  
News and gossip from the music world

Graphic design collective **GHava** (formerly Graphic Havoc) recently launched a quarterly publication series, limited to runs of 1000. The first is *Castles and Christians*, a collection of art from Brooklyn illustrator **J. Penny**. • Twee pop's most miserable band, **Arab Strap**, has split up. They'll mark their divorce with *Ten Years Of Tears* (Beggars), a compilation of demos, remixes, and b-sides to be released in early 2007. • **American Hardcore** is a new documentary that traces the roots of the hardcore scene (punk, that is) from 1980 to 1986, featuring footage of **Bad Brains**, **Anti**, **D.O.A.**, and more. Check it at [www.sonyclassics.com/americanhardcore](http://www.sonyclassics.com/americanhardcore). • Also out now is *Rising Son: The Legend of Christian Hosoi*, a film about the '80s skate luminary, narrated by Dennis Hopper. More info at [www.visionfilms.net](http://www.visionfilms.net). • **House Industries** recently released a shoe with California's **Medium Design Group**. **The Arborist** (\$95) is a Wallabee-style bootie that comes in dark-brown-and-tan woodgrain patterns; it is accompanied by a CD containing five House fonts. • As of September 6, **Trevor Jackson's** bleeding-edge UK dance imprint **Output Recordings** closed its doors. • NYC bids a sad farewell

to house DJ/producer, former *Time Out* club editor, and witty agent provocateur **Adam Goldstone**, who died unexpectedly on August 30. Our condolences go out to his friends and family. • **The Future of Music Coalition** introduced **HINT** (the Health Insurance Navigation Tool), a program offering free phone consultations that demystify the health care process for independent musicians. Visit [www.futureofmusic.org](http://www.futureofmusic.org). • **Voice1156** (1156 Seventh Ave.) is a San Diego gallery whose past shows have included the likes of **Chris Duncan**, **Shepard Fairey**, and **Estevan Oriol**. Catch them at [www.voice1156.com](http://www.voice1156.com). • In spring 2007, **Boost Mobile** will unveil limited-edition lifestyle accessories, including MP3- and cell phone cases from **Livvy Outernational** and **Denim Design Lab**, and cell phone wallpapers from **Madsteez**, members of the **RVCA Artist Network Program**, and **Seventh Letter** affiliates (including **Saber**, **Retna**, and **Revok**). • The atmospheric rock of **Explosions in the Sky's** "Your Hand in Mine" is used in a new Cadillac commercial, while indie band **Of Montreal** recently re-recorded the lyrics of "Wraith Pinned to the Mist (And

Other Games)" at the behest of **Outback Steakhouse**. • London's legendary record shop/label **Rough Trade** turns 30 this year. A UK-only compilation, released on September 25, marked the anniversary with **Luella Bartley**, **Erol Alkan**, and **Jarvis Cocker** picking their favorite songs. • Gloom rock is back with the re-release of **Nurse With Wound's** *An Awkward Pause* (United Jnana) and a double header from **4AD**: a career-spanning two-CD collection from **Dead Can Dance** and the US release of **Cocteau Twins' Lullabies to Violaine**. • Industrial dub-techno agitators **Meat Beat Manifesto** release their *Travelogue Live 05* DVD on November 21, featuring live footage from Austin, Berlin, and Osaka. • **Anthology Recordings** is the first ever all-digital reissue label, which launched last month with rarities from **Adrian Sherwood's African Head Charge**, late-'70s punk bands **China Shop** and **Suicide Commandos**, and obscure Swedish psych from **Pärson Sound**. Grok it at [www.anthologyrecordings.com](http://www.anthologyrecordings.com). • **Bling Bling** is a board game based on street dice game C. Lo; players move around the board collecting cash and property, with the winner being crowned the "Ultimate Hustler." Check [www.456productions.com](http://www.456productions.com). • Bay Area indie hip-hop label **Quannum** recently inked a distribution deal with **TVT** (home to Lil' Jon and Ying-Yang Twins), and named **Blackalicious' Chief Xcel** their chairman and CEO. • For the latest in Brazilian bands, check *XLR8R* writer **Bruno Natal's Banana** podcast at [www.badtrip.com.br/banana](http://www.badtrip.com.br/banana). • **Red Bull Music Academy** now has its own radio show, featuring exclusive mixes and interviews with the likes of **Questlove**, **Lindström**, **Underground Resistance**, and **Danny Krivit**; they also have a weekly podcast. Check [www.rbmaradio.com](http://www.rbmaradio.com). • Stay up.

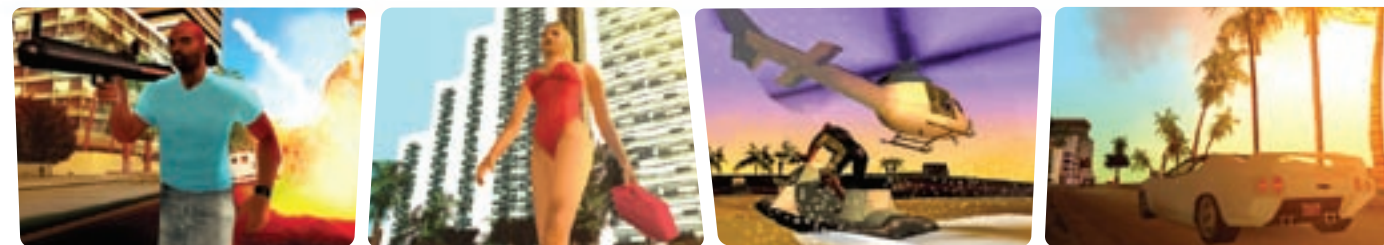
1. GHava's *Castles and Christians*.
2. Arab Strap.
3. Voice1156 gallery.
4. Adam Goldstone.
5. Chief Xcel.
6. Explosions in the Sky.

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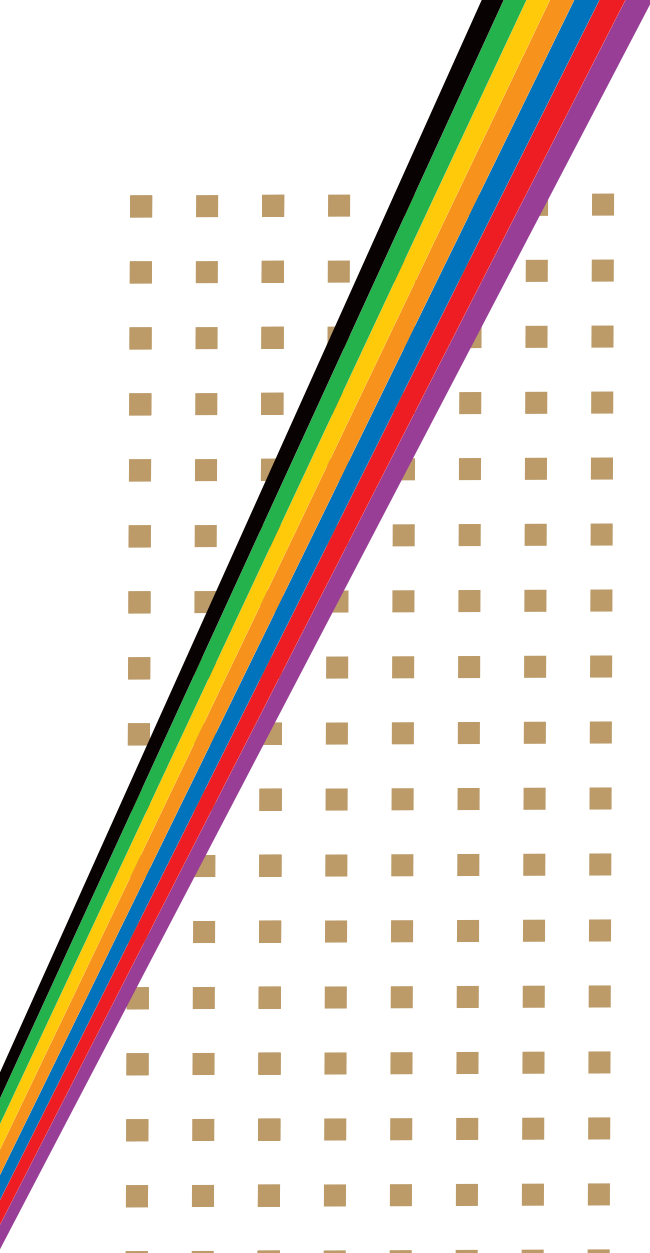
## PUSHER MAN

One of electronic music's great iconoclasts, Squarepusher has made a career out of pushing buttons and boundaries. With the release of his eleventh album, the reticent savant opens up about melody, methodology, and everything in between.

WORDS: MARK PYTLIK PHOTOS: DONALD CHRISTIE  
TYPE & ILLUSTRATION: TYPESTEREO







“IT IS WISE  
TO LET  
SILENCE  
SPEAK”

Sadist. Self-saboteur. Shit disturber. Over the years, Tom Jenkinson has been called all of the above, sometimes by his beleaguered fans. Like a jazz drummer who refuses to lay in the pocket, his discography's 11-year arc has been winding and evasive; to the frustration of many, the Chelmsford, UK-born musician has made an art of dabbling in subgenres just long enough to prove his ability before moving on.

After siring a breakcore classic (1997's much-loved *Big Loada* EP), Jenkinson turned right back around and served up the knotted jazz-funk of *Music Is Rotted One Note*; later, he'd chase the delectably weird beats of 2001's *Go Plastic* with *Ultravisitor*'s lustrous, six-stringed basslines and classical guitars.

After over a decade's worth of conditioning, you'd be forgiven for assuming Squarepusher's latest would mark yet another left turn, perhaps something more deeply rooted in one of his loves, like improvisational jazz or *musique concrète*. But the irony of the newly released *Hello Everything* is that, if it does elicit surprise, it will be because it sounds exactly like everything he's ever done before.

This is certainly no bad thing. As evidenced by the title, *Hello Everything* represents Jenkinson's attempt to rectify his many signature sounds and song styles into a larger whole. The end result is one of the most magnanimous records of his career, but it's hardly a sign that his exploratory instincts are fading. As rigorously interested in process and intent as anyone making electronic music today, Jenkinson's pages-long email interview responses prove he's still as thoughtful and as hawkish about his work practices and philosophies as ever. And yet, in the same pages, there are hints that he's softened up a bit over time, and that he's perhaps less interested in agitating than he once was.

The biggest tip-off is the tunes. Spanning sprightly videogame electro-pop, booming breakcore, electro-acoustic jitterfunk, and yawning drone pieces, *Hello*

*Everything* is the closest that Jenkinson has come to giving his listeners a career anthology. And where his late-'90s output saw him militantly resisting the temptation to "push the rousing melody button"—both in an effort to maintain artistic freedom and to "somehow critique the notion of satisfaction that is tied up with melodic resolution"—*Hello Everything* ranks among his most melodically accomplished records. It's a decision he made consciously, based on influence from an unlikely source. "I read a remark made by Brian Wilson in the sleeve notes to one of the numerous editions of *Pet Sounds*," he writes. "It said, roughly, that he wanted to assemble the sounds on his record such as to make the listener feel loved by them. Although I initially found the remark quite odd, it was also quite touching and stuck with me."

This wholehearted embrace of melody also allowed Jenkinson to stave off another of his creeping fears, that of disappearing into a dark wormhole of musical auteurism. Because he operates primarily

## AMEN, BROTHER

Squarepusher has developed a reputation as a ruthless break chopper, so it's surprising to hear a relatively untouched amen break ringing out on "Hello Meow," the first track from *Hello Everything*. We asked Squarepusher what message he hoped this would convey (especially to some of his more hardcore fans), and he broke it down for us.

"The reason that the amen break is untouched on that track is that it didn't need to be processed or chopped up in order to make the track work as a whole. My principal heritage as a musician is from playing bass in various groups as a teenager—this left me with the sense that it is only worth playing what is necessary to make the piece as a whole hang together. No matter what the musical terrain—whether it is electronic, jazz-based, or electro-acoustic—unnecessary musical information is the first mistake that an insensitive musician will make. What that illustrates is that you are not confident in what you have played and thus feel obliged to keep rephrasing it. It is wise to let silence speak, which is, of course, necessary to form the contrast with non-silent musical events.


"As far as what anyone would think about me leaving the break untouched, who cares? Nonetheless, I understand your point—it is clear that a lot of people interested in electronic music have a 'box-ticking' mentality, whereby a track has to fulfill certain material criteria to be worthy of attention. I see this as a grave problem. For me, it is traceable back to a commodity-oriented society that has only specifications and statistics as its tools to discern value. Maybe this is appropriate to cars, golf clubs or sex aids, but I maintain that music will never entirely yield to this reductive approach.

"One of my attitudes is to try

to make music that invalidates the categories imposed by the box-ticking process. I sensed this a long time ago, which is one of the reasons I tried to deliberately divide opinion on my work with *Music Is Rotted One Note*. I like to keep playing this game by putting together albums that will hopefully frustrate any listener who is only interested in having their own aural agenda fulfilled. I demand more of my audience than that. I demand that the listener pays critical attention not only to my ideas, but also their own. Ultimately, I don't care about being a good artist; it is much more significant to me to try to get a few people to address how manufactured and lazy our attitudes to music are. Maybe my methods are crude but, if nothing else, it illustrates that I have a high estimation of my listeners.

"I am the first to admit the usefulness of categories in music. They are bound up in our entire approach to the world. Anyone who dreams of music without categorical boundaries is missing the fact that rules are what make the game playable. In a world of pure contemplation, categories may fall away, but that it is not a world where music can exist, depending as it does on contrasts, negated as such by pure sameness. It seems sensible to see the category as a touchstone—a venerable source of the accumulated experiences of others—but also to make forays beyond it; refer but not defer."





**“I’M TRYING TO LET  
ALL THE SOUNDS  
PLAY TOGETHER  
INSTEAD OF FIGHT.”**

in a genre where artists are celebrated for their programming prowess, the extent of Jenkinson’s virtuoso musicianship is often overlooked. After sharing the bill with him at a Jimi Hendrix tribute show at London’s Royal Festival Hall in June of last year, Red Hot Chili Peppers’ Flea declared Jenkinson “the best bass player in the world.” The accolade likely means nothing to a man so divorced from outside input—he not only abstains from reading his own press and fan reviews, but also from collecting sales figures on any of his albums (so as not to be swayed by the results).

Nonetheless, Jenkinson acknowledges that he has “a preoccupation with a certain standard of excellence” when it comes to sheer technical ability. It’s a preoccupation, he says, that has the potential to close as many doors as it opens. “Quite early on in my career as a musician, I noticed a tendency for musicians who are highly skilled to end up playing in bands that are only really listened to by other

musicians,” he says. “It struck me as sad. Why would any musician want to be forced into a situation where the audience is mainly interested in their technical ability?”

Up until now, it’s a problem he’s handled strategically, by overpowering his playing with huge swaths of electronics. “I like to ridicule my bass-playing ability as much as I like to display it, and supplying brute electronic force seemed a good way to relativize the significance of highly developed guitar technique,” he explains. “It is as if a man is portrayed standing next to a mountain.” But perhaps inevitably, Jenkinson soon realized he was exploiting his programming fluency in much the same way: “It had become a new kind of virtuosity and I wanted to abandon it,” he says.

So where to go from there? According to Jenkinson, the only logical way out of the labyrinth was back through the way he came, hence this record. “It’s a no-holds-barred exposition of the sorts of things

I had previously tried to find alternatives to,” he admits. “Arrogantly or otherwise, I am sure it will succeed. I hope this doesn’t sound cynical, as this record is a more or less explicit attempt to compile an album for people, as opposed to investigating different principles of music. It is, I suppose, a step down from the lofty intellectual ambitions of other works. People rather than principles.”

And while Jenkinson will no doubt find new sources of tension to provide the static charge for his next records, he appears to be reveling in the sense of placidity that’s come from this closet cleaning. “If I have come out on the other side of something, it is the need to set up such highly charged sonic battles,” he says. “I’m trying to let off the reins [and] let all the sounds play together instead of fight. Maybe this is Brian Wilson’s fault!”

Squarepusher’s *Hello Everything* (Warp) is out now.  
[www.warprecords.com](http://www.warprecords.com)

## **MUSIC, SQUARED**

The gear that plays a starring role in *Hello Everything*.

Historically, Jenkinson has been loath to talk about his recording gear, not out of a fear of people mimicking his sound, but out of a disdain for the culture of gearhounds, and the value system it reinforces. Recently, though, he’s had a change of heart. “This [silence] reinforces a stupid traditional notion of the artist as a genius in supreme control of his tools,” he says. “Instead, I started to consider that the equipment has a role, significant in the sense that it determines not only the nature of the sounds used, but the way in which they are organized.” With that in mind, here are a few pieces that played a big part in *Hello Everything*.

### **EVENTIDE ORVILLE + DSP4000**

“These are pretty much my favorite hardware sound-processing units. Although these units are primarily built for signal processing, my favorite thing to do with them is to build sound-generating tools with them. The system is set up for building algorithms using the various classes of modules including mathematical, interface, control process, dynamics, etc.”

### **BASS GUITAR WITH MIDI PICKUP**

“Most of what sounds like sequenced synths on this and other records are actually being controlled from a bass guitar with a MIDI pickup. This system is flawed in that it always takes a few cycles of the note for the converter to identify the frequency. At the bottom end of a bass, that delay can approach one-tenth of a second. In addition to this, the converter is not always accurate in its rendering of a sequence of notes. In particular, it will quite often produce incorrect notes that are harmonically related, most often 5ths or octaves. Sometimes it simply makes notes up from trying to encode sympathetic string vibrations. All in all, really careful setting up is required—it can be made to behave itself.”

### **MUSIC MAN BASS**

“I have an old Music Man four-string bass, which I often use for live shows, and it features on a few tracks on this album. It has two humbucker pickups, which are configurable in various ways and thus have a bigger range of sounds than the typical Stingray [bass]. It is great for gigs as it has such a punchy sound, but can be difficult to tame in the studio. Part of the problem is getting very lively sounds from instruments such as this to sit well with sounds from computers. Thus, a lot of effort on my part is made getting the computers to sound as aggressive as possible to fit in with the live instruments.”



# SOUND ADVICE

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR AUDIO

Ever wanted to mod your iPod, set up your stereo properly, or organize your record shelves? Six experts explain how.

WORDS: KEN TAYLOR TYPE: TYPESTEREO

PHOTOS: RICHARD OKON, PAUL O'VALLE, DREW REYNOLDS, RAGNAR SCHMUCK, AND MARK SINK

## HOW TO: DIGITALLY PROCESS YOUR GUITAR

With Christopher Willits

PHOTO: PAUL O'VALLE

Not only does San Francisco-based Christopher Willits have releases on Ghostly International, 12k, Ache, and Sub Rosa, but he also teaches sound art and design workshops at the SF Art Institute and Bay Area Video Coalition. "There are tons of ways to process a guitar with a computer, and no right or wrong method," he advises. "Experiment to find the sound you need."

Christopher Willits' *Surf Boundaries* is out now on Ghostly International.  
[www.christopherwillits.com](http://www.christopherwillits.com)

### 1. GET A CLEAN SOURCE SIGNAL

Make sure you have a strong, solid signal from your guitar. Good pickups will make your guitar output hotter, as well as using new, good-quality strings (I use Seymour Duncan humbuckers and Ernie Ball strings). And don't skimp on a heavy-duty quarter-inch cable. Every connection from the guitar to your computer can add noise to the signal path. Be wary of cathode ray tube (CRT) computer monitors, too, which can create a nasty (or tasty) hum.

### 2. USE PREAMPS AND ANALOG PROCESSING

Using a preamp to boost your guitar output before an audio interface will help you avoid extra noise in your signal. And don't feel like you need to do everything in the computer. Mix analog and digital signal processing. Analog distortion may sound better and it's one less thing for your computer to process. I use battery-powered preamps and pedals in case a European show doesn't have a voltage converter. My preamp recommendations: the Line 6 Pod and the SansAmp Classic.

### 3. CHOOSE YOUR DIRECT INTERFACE (DI) AND AUDIO INTERFACE

I like to use an active DI (either a Countryman or a SansAmp) following my pre-amp, and I output to an audio interface that has XLR inputs (MOTU Traveler). This protects the signal from radio interference, making it more robust. There are a lot of FireWire audio interfaces with XLR inputs (bus-powered interfaces don't hurt), but make sure you have phantom power on your interface to power the active DI—or make sure the DI takes batteries.

### 4. BE CAREFUL OF LATENCY

Latency (delayed input vs. output) can be especially annoying if you are playing to a pulse or a drummer. Set your audio interface input/output buffer size to no more than 512 samples (128 or 256 even better). Less buffer size equals less latency and also more processing tax. Get the fastest computer that you can afford and fill it with as much RAM as possible.

### 5. USE YOUR FEET

I free my hands for playing guitar and mixing control, and I use a Behringer FCB1010 MIDI pedal to control my software, Ableton Live, and the plug-ins I make with Max/MSP/Jitter. I use the computer for nonlinear processing, folding, frequency-domain munging, etc. Unless you are doing something similarly fun, stick with chains of analog foot pedals. You won't need worry about computer issues, and will have more time to play your guitar!





**HOW TO:**  
*SET UP YOUR HOME STEREO*

**With Tony Andrews  
of Funktion One**  
PHOTO: RICHARD OKON

Tony Andrews has been creating massive, state-of-the-art soundsystems since the '70s. His company, Funktion One, has been embraced by the dance-music community and his patented Dance Stack speaker systems can be found in clubs from Lisbon's Lux to NYC's Cielo. Funktion One's installations are legendary, but they're based on some pretty simple principles. Here are Andrews' tips for setting up your own boomin' system at home.

[www.funktion-one.com](http://www.funktion-one.com)

**1. CHOOSE YOUR SPEAKERS**

Look for a healthy efficiency or sensitivity rating (represented in dB as "SPL" or "Sound Pressure Level"), around or above 90 dB. The speakers are going to be lively, reactive, and fast. When you audition speakers, listen to the same music—something you know really well. And don't listen for the obvious. When it gets to a noisy passage and you can't quite make out what the singer's saying, that's the bit to be listening to.

**2. PICK YOUR SPEAKER WIRE**

Thick, monocrystalline stuff is great. Its purity level has been treated so that there are fewer crystalline interfaces (current disturbances) in the wire.

**3. POSITION THE SPEAKERS AND YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

Ideally, where you're going to listen—your couch, say—is going to be in the middle of two corners of a room. If you want more bass, put

the speakers in the corners. The corner of a room is a bit of a horn and it'll aid the low-end. Put the speaker against the wall, so you won't have an out-of-time reflection with the sound bouncing behind it. Put the speakers up high, above the furniture.

**4. TREAT THE ROOM**

You can work wonders for the stereo imagery if you take a bed sheet and literally hang it from the ceiling over your head. The thicker and feltier the material, the better the low-end is absorbed. A lot of stereo imagery information comes from the high frequencies. When they hit the ceiling and reflect, they tend to cloud the image. If you really wanted to go for it, you could put drapes all around the room, with lots of folds (about three times the length).

**5. CONSIDER YOUR NEIGHBORS**

It's very hard to stop bass, and that's what annoys others. But it's amazing how much sound can actually get through an air gap, so make sure your door gaps are tight. To stop bass, you need weight, so obviously concrete or brick walls are better than wooden or plastic. Point the speakers toward where you are, and think about what's getting in the way. Also, consider whom you're more willing to annoy: the upstairs or the downstairs neighbors.



**HOW TO:**  
*GET THE BEST SOUND FROM YOUR HOME STUDIO RECORDINGS*

**With Guy Davie  
of The Exchange**  
PHOTO: RICHARD OKON

Mastering engineers almost never get the props they deserve, but when Guy Davie (of London's venerable mastering and cutting house The Exchange) is at the helm, almost everyone takes notice. Just ask Dwayne Sodahberk, who named his 2002 disc *Mastered by Guy at the Exchange* in Davie's honor. Davie has mastered records for Björk, Air, The Streets, and R. Kelly; here, he walks us through how to get the most from your home recording sessions.

[www.exchangemastering.co.uk](http://www.exchangemastering.co.uk)

**1. FOCUS ON CLARITY**

At every stage of your recording, make sure clarity is your priority. We can use a variety of techniques to create punch and energy but once you've lost clarity you can't get it back. Don't overdo the layering of instruments (one guitar can sound more powerful than six) and don't use too many different effects. Even a massive wall of rock distortion needs clarity!

**2. KNOW YOUR SYSTEM**

Play music that sounds great in your car, living room, or private jet on your recording monitors and compare the sound to your mixes and mastering. All through the recording, mixing, and mastering stages, refer back to some fantastic-sounding recordings. A truly great recording sounds beautiful on any system.

**3. DON'T GO PLUG-IN CRAZY**

Try to find a couple of favorite EQ and dynamics processors. Most professional mastering engineers use a mixture of analog and digital outboard gear; it's up to you to find which plug-ins give you the sound you want and stick with them. Getting to know what you've got will be more valuable than buying the latest thing.

**4. FREQUENCY AND BITS**

Use the highest quality audio that you can at every stage. If you can record, mix, and master at 96kHz and 24-bit, then do so—it eats up MB but it's worth it. When you've completed the mastering and are ready to bounce or burn, choose your dither not by what ads or engineers say, but by what retains a natural, detailed sound.

**5. LEAVE THE MAXIMIZING TO THE END**

Try to retain as much energy as possible by keeping plenty of dynamic range in your stereo mix. Keep those meters bouncing! Peak your mix to -1 or 0 and don't try to maximize loudness at this stage—keep it sounding open and exciting. Leave the level maximizing until last, but don't go over the top. You want it loud, but keep that clarity!





## HOW TO:

# ORGANIZE YOUR RECORD COLLECTION

With Nikolaus Schaefer  
of Rotation Records

PHOTO: RAGNAR SCHMUCK

Nikolaus Schaefer and Martin Gorges of Berlin's Rotation Records have settled the shelves of Ellen Allien and DJ T. (at roughly 100 man-hours per collection) and they're readying themselves for Tiefschwarz's 25,000-piece stockroom next. Whether you've sort of got a system, or "utter chaos" (as Schaefer describes Allien's collection), Niko and Martin have a solution.

[www.rotation-records.de](http://www.rotation-records.de)

### 1. SORT BY LABEL, LABEL FAMILY, AND ARTIST

For example, take Underground Resistance and all sub-labels: UR, Red Planet, Happy Records. Then all Jeff Mills productions and Axis and Purpose Maker releases. Add all Rob Hood projects and his Drama and M-Plant releases. Do the same for the Hardwax family (Basic Channel, Chain Reaction, Burial Mix, Smith N Hack, Monolake, etc.). If you find more than 10 records in this cluster, build it its own label case. More than 60 records in this group? Divide that stuff again into their sub-labels. And don't forget to name those cases from the start. When you sort 10,000-plus records, you'll lose track dozens of times.

### 2. MAKE "CITY" BOXES

For labels with less than 10 records, arrange by city (then by label). If you just can't remember the record (it happens!), or if there is no clue of the producer, read the label info for the place of origin. Phone and fax numbers are helpful. Of course, there's always [www.discogs.com](http://www.discogs.com) if you've got time and internet access. With both Ellen and DJ T. we ended up with huge boxes labeled "Chicago," "Detroit," "New York," "Berlin," "Frankfurt," and so on.

### 3. DRAW PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

If you have fewer than five records of one label, file them according to some personal connection or sound. You could put Soundlike and Accidental with Mantis and Music for Freaks, or T. Melchior and Baby Ford records could go beside Aubrey, Mark Broom, Ferox, Cristian Vogel, and Bandulu.

### 4. ORGANIZE INTO GENRES

Whatever's left you can probably classify into genres. Trance, old school hardcore, ambient, compilations, pop, disco, grime, 2-step, hard tek—you name it. Generally these should be records that are not in your current playlist: older stuff, records you started with that bring back good memories. These are the ones you will put way up on your shelf or maybe even bring them to your basement or attic.

### 5. GET RID OF STUFF

You own too many records anyway! How many of your white labels have you never listened to? How old are they? Bring these to your local flea market, record dealer, or record fair. Whatever you do, get rid of them!

Rotation Records' Martin Gorges (left) and Niko Shaefer



## HOW TO: HACK YOUR IPOD

With Adam Pash of Lifehacker  
PHOTO: DREW REYNOLDS

"Don't live to geek. Geek to live" is the motto of Lifehacker, a productivity guide/weblog for those who want to open up the insides of their tools, computers, and software. We asked the site's Associate Editor and resident MP3-player geek Adam Pash for five cool ways to get our iPods to do something new.

[www.lifehacker.com](http://www.lifehacker.com)

### 1. RUN LINUX

The iPodLinux project adds a new operating system to your iPod. If Windows is your responsible, businessman friend and Apple's the hip, artsy one, Linux is the wildly talented dilettante no one understands. iPodLinux can add video playback to non-video iPods, and support additional audio formats, high-quality line-in recording through your headphone jack, and *Doom* and *Dance Dance Revolution* knockoffs. You can choose to boot into either iPodLinux or Apple's comfy defaults at any time.

[www.ipodlinux.org](http://www.ipodlinux.org)

### 2. PIMP YOUR IPOD

Clean lines, minimalist design, and shiny stainless steel put the iPod miles ahead in the beauty competition—until you take it out of the box, that is. Give your iPod the brushed-metal look common to your average stainless steel appliance. All it takes is the rough side of a kitchen sponge and a half hour to give your iPod that fingerprint-free, brushed-metal look.

[www.members.optusnet.com.au/brushedipod](http://www.members.optusnet.com.au/brushedipod)

### 3. ADD ROCKBOX IPOD FIRMWARE

Rockbox is another free (as in speech) user-friendly alternative to the default iPod firmware, this time adding more support for additional audio formats, a five-band parametric equalizer, custom themes, and drag-and-drop syncing without iTunes. As a bonus for any of you non-iPod owners, Rockbox firmware is available for several other digital audio players.

[www.rockbox.org/wiki/bin/view/Main/IpodPort](http://www.rockbox.org/wiki/bin/view/Main/IpodPort)

### 4. SURF WIKIPEDIA

The Encyclopodia project lets you browse Wikipedia's glorious esoteric user-based content from the comfort and portability of your iPod. After you've installed Encyclopodia, you can boot your iPod into either Encyclopodia or the default iPod interface (just like iPodLinux or Rockbox). Once you're comfortable spelling out words with your click wheel, you can enjoy Wikipedia on the go.

[encyclopodia.sourceforge.net](http://encyclopodia.sourceforge.net)

### 5. PLAY IPODMAME VIDEOGAMES

iPodMAME is a port of the popular MAME arcade game emulator for your iPod that works with the iPodLinux firmware. That's right, *Pac-Man* and *Frogger*. On your iPod. Need I say more?

[www.ipodlinux.org/ipodmame](http://www.ipodlinux.org/ipodmame)

## WE GOT A LOT ON LOCK.

clothing, books, videos, music  
and of course, the dj + producer gear



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424 north fairfax ave 323.782.0173

online superstore  
[www.turtablelab.com](http://www.turtablelab.com)

turtable lab manhattan  
120 east 7th st 212.677.0675

## TURNTABLE LAB



## HOW TO:

### ENCODE YOUR MP3s

With Scott Paradis of Beatport

PHOTO: MARK SINK

Before you rip your vinyl and CDs into a tinny 96k format, take a lesson from Beatport Project Manager Scott Paradis. Beatport supplies DJs and electronic music lovers with only the highest quality 320kbit/s or WAV sound files. And after cracking their five-millionth download this year and launching v3.0 of Beatport.com, it's obvious that they're doing things right. Here's how you can too.

[www.beatport.com](http://www.beatport.com)

#### 1. UNDERSTAND THE ENCODING BASICS

Uncompressed WAV files yield the best audio quality. The drawback? They require huge amounts of storage space—about 10MB per minute of audio. Encoding a song into MP3 removes portions of sound that fall at the very high and low ends of the human hearing spectrum and thus reduces the overall file size with little discernible difference in sound quality. The amount of data used to represent the audio is known as the bit-rate.

#### 2. CHOOSE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Since your MP3 player has limited space, a bit-rate of 192kbit/s is a solid compromise of size vs. quality. Playing your music back on large, powerful club systems? Go with the maximum 320kbit/s. You can always re-encode them to lower bit-rates if more space is required, but going from low to high only increases file size and doesn't put back the audio data that was removed.

#### 3. CHOOSE YOUR FORMAT

AAC/M4A, or Advanced Audio Codec (compression/decompression algorithm), is a format popularized by Apple's iTunes music store and similar to MP3. At mid- to low bit-rates, AAC generally outperforms MP3. However, at higher bit-rates, the two are nearly identical. It comes down to a matter of preference and compatibility. MP3 is the most widely recognized and compatible format, but AAC is slowly gaining greater acceptance.

#### 4. LOSSY VS. LOSSLESS

AAC and MP3 are "lossy" formats—they lose audio present in the original uncompressed song. Lossless formats are gaining popularity, such as FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec). These are kind of like ZIP files, reducing the size but keeping the exact original data intact. FLAC can reduce size by 30-50% over the original WAV file, whereas MP3 and AAC can achieve much higher reductions in size, often 80% or more. FLAC is a great archiving format, but right now very few products support lossless codec playback.

#### 5. ENCODE YOUR FILE

The LAME codec is the undisputed king for creating MP3 files. It's a free, open-source app ([www.lame.sourceforge.net](http://www.lame.sourceforge.net)) so don't get duped into paying for it. Since LAME is a cross-platform command-line program, there are lots of free graphical user interfaces (GUIs) that allow for ease of use and control of the various options. Unless you are comfortable with command-line programming, make sure you get a GUI front-end for LAME. But for most average music connoisseurs, iTunes will do the trick.

## Creative Explosion

This is Live 6, the latest version of Ableton's award-winning software that composers, producers, DJs and musicians worldwide have taken to heart. Live now includes a versatile, comprehensive collection of sounds ready to play and inspire - from faithfully sampled acoustic and electric instruments to impressive electronic creations. Pre-configured controls let you play expressively without worrying about technical intricacies, or, if you prefer, you can dig deeper and explore endless possibilities for creating your own unique and personal sounds.

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version 6



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Jesse Rose

# Getting Restless

Fed up with 4/4 formulas, a new group of West Londoners makes house that snaps, crackles, and poplocks.  
WORDS: JOSHUA P. FERGUSON TYPE & ILLUSTRATION: TYPESTEREO

You may not know what to call the hybrid house sounds being made by Jesse Rose, Solid Groove, and company, but there's no mistaking its potent mix of mind-numbingly crisp techno/house beats, gritty, sample-riddled melodies, and bassbin-blowing sub-sonics—or its effectiveness on a dancefloor. UK Magazine *DJ* came close earlier this year when they dubbed the genre “fidget house,” but even this catchy turn-of-phrase fails to encapsulate the whole essence of the sound.

A more apt touchstone for Americans might be “crunk house”—not because it's coked-up and drunk, but for the way its fuzzed-up, chunky basslines collide with crunchy, pulsating house rhythms to create a refreshingly original soundclash.

**TWITCHY FINGERS**

At the forefront of fidget is Jesse Rose, producer and label manager extraordinaire (he runs the Loungin, Made to Play, and Front Room labels). Thanks in part to recent publicity, Rose has established himself as one of house music's most in-demand remixers, and he just completed a full-length album featuring collaborations with Henrik Schwarz and Domu. Though he's been producing for eight years, his love for dance music started long ago. “I got into this at 14 and loved to



"People are ready for music that's slightly less serious in the clubs."

-Dave Taylor



Trevor Loveys



Graeme Sinden

both listen to records and have a great time going out and partying," says the bearded 28-year-old. "Not a lot has changed."

The roots of fidget were laid down in 2000, when Rose bonded with soon-to-be scene player Dave Taylor (more commonly known as Switch) at a pub Christmas party. "Dave was coming from a deep house angle and I was on a more Chicago/Detroit tip," says Rose. "A year later we put out our first 12-inch on Classic, 'Jazz Chops (No Hang Ups)'—that was, in a way, the start of it."

Rose goes on to explain the driving forces that have taken him and West London cohorts like Taylor, Trevor Loveys, Graeme Sinden, and Joshua Herve into new dancefloor territory. "A couple of years back we just got bored with that stereotypical house music that starts and finishes the same, or builds up, then comes the bassline, then the chords, etc." Influenced by hip-hop and London underground staples like broken beat, grime, and dancehall—as well as the avant-dance meanderings of Herbert and Akufen—the loose-knit collective added breakier, more bass-heavy, and rawer elements to house's blueprint.

Genres aside, Rose points out that the biggest influence on his and Taylor's sound has been working with each other. Interplay and friendly competition in the studio helps build their empire one track at a time. "Dave would do some mad drop in a track and I'd come back with a folk drop," says Rose, discussing their production process. "He'd come back with a rock drop, and I'd be like 'Okay, check this Turkish drop out then.' The more off-key and original, the better, but the rule is the beats must be fat and it must do damage in the club."

#### SWITCH HITTER

Rose is not alone in this web of twisted house beats. The budding genre's first damage-inflictor was produced by Dave Taylor and

Trevor Loveys under their Switch alias; "Get Ya Dub On," released on Freerange in 2003, went on to sell over 15,000 copies.

Taylor is a maniac in the studio, dedicating upwards of 12 hours a day to his productions, and somehow he still finds ample time to wild out. "He likes to party hard and loves a drink... or 10," laughs Rose. Taylor is the main man behind Switch, Solid Groove, and the Dubsided label, which has released dancefloor bangers like Induceve's "Warehouse Shit" and Switch's "A Bit Patchy," whose devastating breakdown makes clever use of the Incredible Bongo Band's breakbeat staple "Apache." Taylor has also lent a hand to productions and remixes for Kelis, Coldcut, and Blaze; when I tracked him down, he was putting the finishing touches on beats for high-profile London artist and preparing to attend the desert bacchanalia known as Burning Man with pal Freq Nasty.

Given all the success, Taylor keeps a laid-back attitude. "It's just a bit of fun really," he says. "We didn't think we'd get away with the humorous angle we put in the records but it seems people are ready for music that's slightly less serious in their clubs. It's a sound we enjoy making, [while] having a laugh and a few beers."

#### BASS JUNKIES

After running into Rose and Taylor at one of their many loft parties, handsome House of 909 veteran Trevor Loveys joined the crew. From his home in West London (the neighborhood most these producers hail from), he reminisces about growing up on '80s electro and hip-hop and jokes about a yet-to-be released "veggie jack" track he's made that samples carrots.

Loveys records under the jack-happy-house-meets-minimal-techno alias SpeakerJunk (alongside Joshua Herve), and the pair runs a label of the same name.

## FIGURING OUT FIDGET

A guide to these five producers' many aliases.

### INDUCEVE

**Members: Dave Taylor & Jesse Rose**

Where it all started. Induceve is an amalgamation of crunchy, cut 'n' paste Herbert-style house and samples ranging from hip-hop to dub to folk. Their *Pick It Up* EP (Dubsided) was the first officially dubbed "fidget."

### SWITCH

**Members: Trevor Loveys & Dave Taylor**

Responsible for some of the crew's biggest records including "A Bit Patchy" (Dubsided), a worldwide hit thanks its brukbeat house twist on the "Apache" break. Equal parts deep Chicago house and Detroit techno, the track is made uniquely their own with clever sampling, squelchy keys, and super-fat bass.

### SOLID GROOVE

**Members: Dave Taylor**

The most prolific alias on the scene, Solid Groove has remixed house giants Basement Jaxx and Blaze, broken beat don Domu, and Brazilian *funkeiro* Edu K. Original credits include the broken beat anthem "Flookin" (Loungin), championed by tastemaker Gilles Peterson and big-room bombs like "This Is Sick" (Front Room).

### BRUCKER & SINDEN

**Members: Dave Taylor & Graeme Sinden**

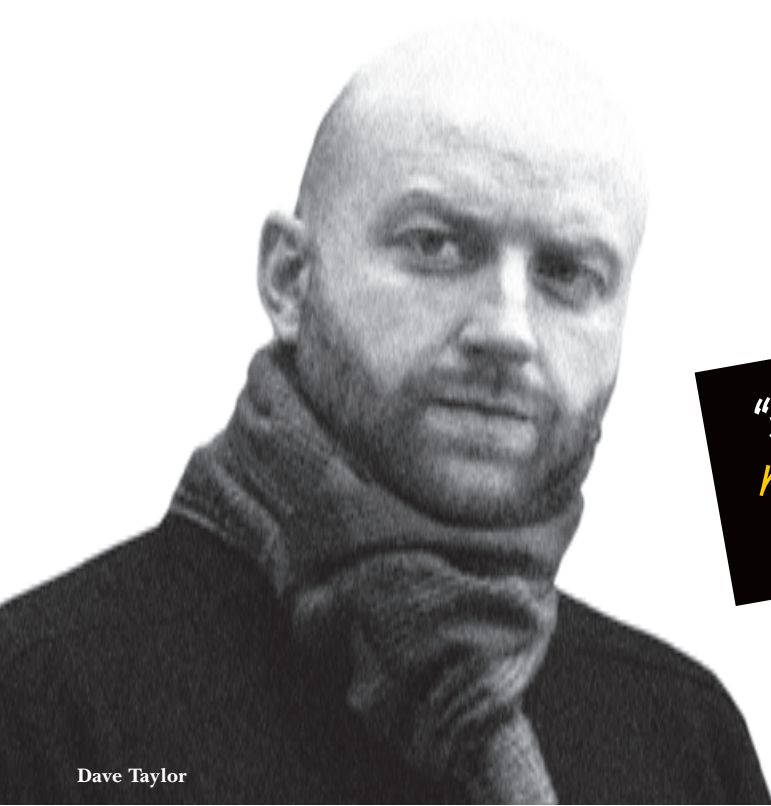
Taking things in a more hip-hop and Baltimore club-influenced direction, these two are the Hollertronix of fidget. They've jacked up Ying-Yang Twins' "Shake," mashed up Pharrell's "Can I Have It Like That" with Mr. Vegas' version of "Under Mi Sensi," and crunked up Busta Rhymes & Amerie's "Touch."

### SPEAKER JUNK

**Members: Trevor Loveys & Joshua Herve**

This duo deftly crafts jacking, warbly bass club monsters. Their premier 12-inch was May's "Scratch Up the Music" for their eponymous label, and they've kept up the pressure with broken electro-house reworkings of Jimi Hendrix and Busta Rhymes.





Dave Taylor

*"As long as the music has some kinda nasty bass and it works in the club... that's all that matters." -Graeme Sinden*



Joshua Herve

"From funk to hip-hop, from dub to disco, it's all in the mix" is how Loveys describes his sound, and Herve—the group's 26-year-old young gun—concur. "I like all kinds of music: electronic music, guitar music, hip-hop, and funk," he writes in a manic email. "This makes my music crunchy, funky, jackin' (in respect to the house stuff), and freessssshhhhh."

The final member of this five-fecta is Graeme Sinden. Fresh off of two mighty unpredictable tracks for Basement Jaxx's Atlantic Jaxx label, he's also recently kicked out remixes for Lady Sovereign, Mary J. Blige, and fellow West Londoners Bugz in the Attic. Described by some as the UK's answer to Diplo, Sinden adds Baltimore club, Miami bass, and *baile* funk to house's repertoire. "Meeting Jesse Rose and Dave Taylor inspired me to make house music that doesn't follow convention or have to be so sparkly clean," he notes. "You can pitch-shift vocals, use crazy samples, chop a vocal in a different way, drop out of the groove for eight bars into an old break—mess with people for a minute. As long as the music has some kinda nasty bass and it works in the club... that's all the matters."

#### CHOPPING GAME

West London's furious five had no calculated plan to take over the dance world with their backwards-sampled, funk-heavy house bliss, but they've managed to do so anyway, while nurturing a collective consciousness and natural flow. Their records are so surprising—in their special twists and tempos—that they appear in record bags as diverse as Derrick Carter's, Jazzanova's, and Gilles Peterson's. They're big, memorable records, suitable for dropping in mega-clubs and obscure lounges.

Refusing to be corralled into a particular sound, this band of West Londoners keeps it business as usual. "We just chop it up," says Loveys, laughing. "We put it in the blender with some veggies, turn the blender on, have a fag and a beer, tell a few jokes, switch the blender on again, and pour it into the mashatronic soul expander... and veggie jack is born, or is it fidget? What was I talking about again?"

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Danish producer/remixer **Anders Trentemøller** steps away from the dancefloor.

WORDS: DAVID HEMINGWAY PHOTOS: DIRK MERTEN  
TYPE & ILLUSTRATION: TYPESTEREO

“Making *The Last Resort* was a very personal thing for me,” asserts Anders Trentemøller of his debut long-player. “It was like therapy. The music on the album reflects my life, my thoughts, my needs, my insecurities, my longings. It was a very lonely process.”

This loneliness is hard to reconcile with Trentemøller’s discography of techno and tech-house bangers, which includes a gaggle of tracks for imprints like Naked, Tic Tac Toe, and Cassagrande, as well as astounding remixes for the likes of Röyksopp, Unai, The Knife, and Mathias Schaffhauser. Trentemøller dances to beat of his own drummer, literally—“If you can’t dance to the music you do, it’s not good enough,” he states—but he’s equally ambivalent about the throbbing techno at which he excels (and with which he so frequently thrills). Trentemøller describes *The Last Resort* as explicitly “not for the dancefloor” and has even implied that he actually prefers rock to dance music, maintaining that the latter has a limited emotional palette.

“Let’s face it: Dance music is made for the dancefloors to make people dance,” says the youthful Dane, who name-checks Mazzy Star, M. Ward, The Smiths, The Cure, Radiohead, and Slowdive as influences. “Nothing wrong with that but, as far as I see it, if you want music that goes a little



## "do you put a dance track on when your girlfriend has just left you?"

deeper, you have to turn to other genres. Do you put a dance track on when your girlfriend has just left you?"

*The Last Resort* isn't actually an out-and-out rejection of the dancefloor, but it plays like a lovely dance album that's had much of its euphoria sapped by long, cold, Nordic nights. "I don't think that living in Copenhagen has a particular impact on me—maybe more the whole Nordic vibe, the nature here in Denmark and Sweden," explains Trentemøller. "It's a vibe or feeling that is hard to describe but there is a certain melancholic mood to most old Nordic folk music that I like; [and to] the big open spaces and the often violently stormy and rainy weather. I hope you can hear some of that atmosphere in *The Last Resort*."

*The Last Resort* is accompanied by a bonus CD of Trentemøller's singles for Poker Flat and Audiomatique, the most gripping of which are collaborations with Berlin-based Brit Richard Davis on vocals. Davis—a sometime-Swayzak vocalist—frequently evokes Underworld, but in his work with Trentemøller he inverts that group's voyeurism and last-train-home rapture into introspection and melancholia. For example, his vocal take of "Always Something Better" is adorable, yet seethes with the resentment and umbrage of a recently defunct relationship.

"The tracks were really complex, and getting my head around the melodies and structures was quite tricky," says Davis of the collaboration, which happened almost entirely over email. "I suppose [I came] to the conclusion that I was going to have to write something pretty interesting to make what was a great instrumental track into a great song. The music was already carrying a lot of emotion. It was really dramatic stuff and I felt it was necessary to try and get a sense of drama in the singing and the lyrics."

This drama-mixed with the aforementioned Nordic cool—combines to create a record that, at its most removed from the disco, recalls Icelandic atmospherists Sigur Rós. "I didn't know the band but now I've heard their albums and I can hear that we have some of the same sound picture," admits Trentemøller. "So now, I'm actually really into the music they do. It's funny. Maybe it's the Nordic vibe... again."

*The Last Resort* is out now on Poker Flat. [www.pokerflat-recordings.com](http://www.pokerflat-recordings.com)

### OF SOUND MIND Trentemøller talks music technology.

#### What piece of technology has had the most impact on your music?

No doubt, my sequencing program: Acid Pro 6.0. I make all my music in that program and in Sound Forge. Acid Pro is so logical and very easy to use.

#### If money were no object, what piece of music-making equipment would you buy?

Making good music is not at all about having the money to buy the newest gear. It's all about having good ears and trusting them. I would still choose Acid! Now it sounds like I'm sponsored [by them].

#### Talk us through the making of a track.

It varies. Mostly, it starts with a vibe or feeling I have. I sit down with a simple melodic instrument, like a piano, and try to capture that feeling in a melody or atmospheric groove. Then I program the basic drums and bass, and I just go from there and see where the music takes me. I have many ways of trying to reach what I have inside my head and often it ends up very differently than expected.

#### Do you have a particular m. o. when creating remixes?

A remix is not as personal as a track of your own but I don't have a particular way of doing remixes. I always look [for] a good melody in the original—it can be the lead vocal of course, [or] a synth theme—then I basically start all over again and build up a brand new track. Sometimes I do several versions before I'm satisfied. With my remix of Röyksopp's "What Else Is There?" I made seven totally different versions before I came up with the final remix. I have to be 100% satisfied myself before I deliver a mix.



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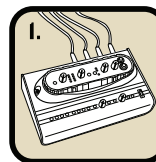
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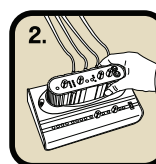




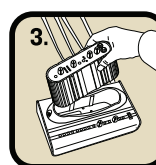
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07



## CONTROL CENTER

A San Francisco new media studio makes its boldest move yet.  
 WORDS: KEN TAYLOR WITH NAUT HUMON  
 PHOTOS: RANDY YAU

One day, this too will all be obsolete. Why? Because San Francisco's Recombinant Media Labs—built by Asphodel Records label heads and industrial music experimenters Naut Humon and Mitzi Johnson—puts into question everything you've ever thought possible about composing, recording, and performing electronic art. And in the years to come, they'll likely top themselves again.

Housed in a non-descript warehouse building in San Francisco's South of Market district, RML (which also encompasses the Asphodel label office) is comprised of an unprecedented 16.8.2-channel, 10-screen surround-cinema performance environment with an external control room, an acoustic performance space with a grand piano, a suite full of synthesizers new and old, a DVD- and CD-mastering studio, and a full-on recording studio with all the bells and whistles of current and bygone eras. But, as Humon says, it's not the technology that drives RML: "It's the people." Based on a model that enables the music community at large, Humon and participating artists (from Jarboe of Swans to Thomas Brinkmann) privately seek grant monies to sponsor their performances and residencies. Artists rarely clock in for the day. Instead, they often spend weeks at a time at the studio, collaborating and creating site-specific musical and visual works.

Today, British sound sculptors Semiconductor are in the studio's master control room, chatting with Australian electronic art curator Paul Thomas and sound designer Nigel Helyer while putting the finishes touches on a multimedia piece that sonically interprets the sun's radiation. They'll later perform it as part of San Jose's International Symposium on Electronic Art. Tomorrow, the room's booked for Ryoji Ikeda, who has composed an audio-visual piece that he'll present while looking in from the outside of the RML's state-of-the-art listening environment.

Join Naut Humon as he presents us with a glimpse of one of electronic art's finest facilities ever.

[www.asphodel.com](http://www.asphodel.com)



### SYNTH ROOM

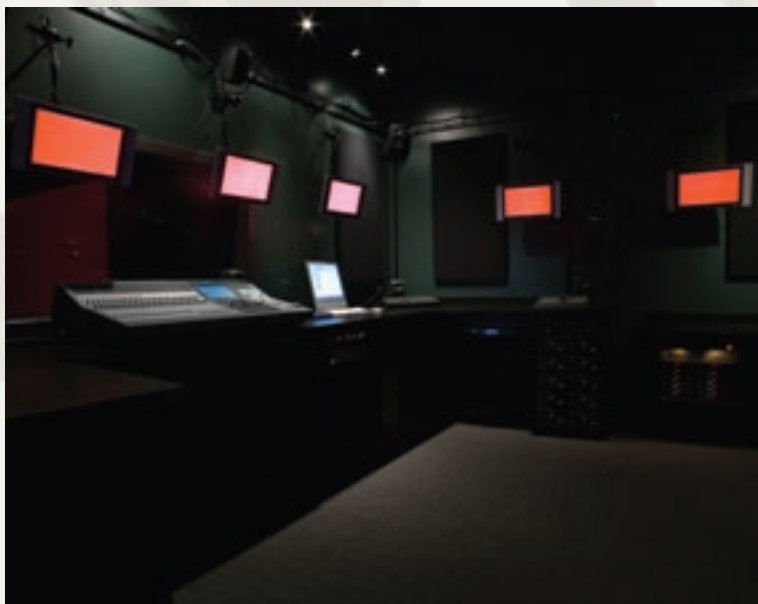
Here is an analog haven where artists can come in and grab sounds for their work. It's all based around hard and soft synths from the past and present, starting from the '70s when I used this SMS Salamander modular synthesizer with joysticks, oscillators, thumbwheels, and all kinds of custom modules like the Outside World Interface. There's also a nine-panel Serge Modular System, which interfaces to the MiniMoogs, drum machines, a full-blown KYMA Capybara computation engine and every type of software synthesizer, so you can play the room like one giant machine. Florian Hecker was here for days just plugging things in, and he used the source material during his residency for a live event.





**VIDEO- AND DVD-EDITING/AUTHORING SUITE**

This spot is where AV editors from the community can weld together visual and audio source material into a coherent piece; the model here is building a bridge between cultural and commercial style jobs. The first client here was Lou Reed, who played a new version of *Metal Machine Music* transcribed and performed by a group named Zeitkratzer from Berlin—an 11-piece group of brass, strings, and percussion—and the inside of a piano; they documented the live concerts of *MMM* in Berlin and brought the results back to mix and edit with Lou and some of his people.



**THE SURROUND TRAFFIC CONTROL ROOM**

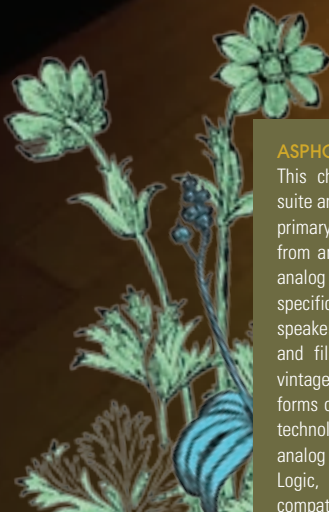
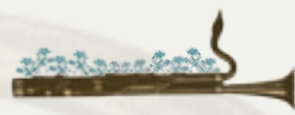
This is a spatial-media-synthesis (or surround-cinema) model for all sizes of rectangular rooms in the world. We chose a 10-screen format—with three screens on each wall and two on each end—but of course this can be scaled down or up, because most global media festivals have only one to four big screens. The panoramic screens are linked to 16 audio channels—eight near the ceiling and eight near the ground, so you can project horizontal, vertical, or diagonal sound trajectories in the X, Y, or Z axes. For multi-channel video, we have 10 DVD players that can all be synchronized together, or real-time video signals can directly emanate from numerous desktop or laptop computers.



**THE RECOMBINANT MEDIA LABS PERFORMANCE THEATRE**

This is our larger acoustic-treated space; our main 360-degree periphonic cinema hub, which the smaller STC control room emulates. The audiences that enter are immersed from all sides by the network of high-resolution screens and speakers. They are welcome to stand, sit, or move around according to the performer's plan, which can optionally include installation- or exhibition-style setups. As experiential engineers, we archive the full impact of the entire production for future playback screening scenarios. This includes the ability to sculpt even the bass frequencies in the unusual formations of eight added sub-low channels, which augment the full-range, circular, 16-speaker array. Couple this with a stereo Infra sub-wave front for a deeper "point-two," and 32 transducers under the floor, and you have a 16.8.2 PA matrix with configurable crossovers. A fascinating research and "envelopment" environment for the inter-media navigator!





**ASPHODEL STUDIO'S MAIN MIX A**  
 This chamber represents a hybrid of a sound-to-picture suite and an audio recording and mixing apparatus. The primary feature is a Neve VR-72 console, which dates from around '93, during the last generation of the bigger analog boards. We had Madlabs in L.A. hot-rod it to 2006 specifications. For monitoring, we utilize two sizes of PMC speakers along with a Dynaudio 5.1 system for broadcast and film audio surround. There are extensive racks of vintage and recent hardware processor equipment for all forms of dynamics applications, including tube and optical technologies. Add to that a powerful Pro Tools system and analog tape machines, as well as all the platforms of DP, Logic, Nuendo, Max/MSP, Supercollider, and PD for full compatibility with home preparation studios.

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Bruce Wayne

IN THE  
STUDIO:  
MIDI  
MAFIA

The hit squad behind 50 Cent and Lil' Kim geeks out.

WORDS: BRANDON IVERS

Since the mid-'60s, production teams like Gamble & Huff and Holland-Dozier-Holland have masterminded the regional innovations and aesthetics behind R&B and soul. Studio partnerships like Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, The Bomb Squad, The Neptunes, and MIDI Mafia are all cast from that old blueprint, stamping their production style into veritable empires within the pop music landscape. Of course, these sorts of empires are never made overnight, and MIDI Mafia's body of work took years to solidify before they collaborated with 50 Cent on the breakout hit "21 Questions." Widening 50's crossover from urban centers to the bingo parlors of Middle America was no small task, and the Mafia's efforts were quickly noticed by industry tastemakers and artists alike. Since then, MIDI Mafia's Dirty Swift and Bruce Wayne have capitalized on the opportunity, approaching hit-making with a "just add vocals" philosophy. With a consistent barrage of songs like Lil Kim's "Who Shot Ya" and Deemi's "Soundtrack of My Life" on Hot 97 rotation, apparently the philosophy works. Dirty Swift fills us in on the process. *Brandon Ivers*

[www.midimafiaonline.com](http://www.midimafiaonline.com)

WHAT ARE YOU GUYS WORKING ON RIGHT NOW?

We have our own artist on Atlantic Records; her name is Deemi and she's signed through our label, Family Ties. We just finished her album, looking to drop the single towards the end of the year and get the full album out next year. We're also in the studio with [*American Idol* winner] Fantasia [Barrino]. [We] did, like, five records with her so far; [we're] not sure how many we'll have on the album, but it's looking like close to half. And there's this new rapper on Interscope called Haze. We did four records for him as well. We're trying to set up our own thing, but we've also got to keep out there as much as possible, so we're out shopping beats, too.

DID YOU GET 50 CENT TO DO "21 QUESTIONS" THROUGH SHOPPING BEATS?

It was being in the right place at the right time with the right shit. 50 was just starting his new situation; he had just got out of Sony. It was a year before the Shady/Aftermath deal that we recorded "21 Questions," so at the time 50 Cent was no big deal. But we liked his stuff from before, so we got him a beat CD through a friend that was trying to sign him for Universal. So we cut the song. It ended up being one of his favorite records and he said he was going to put it on the album... and he was true to his word.



In MIDI Mafia's Studio, Kontakt 2 (this page), MPC 4000 (top right), and Trilogy R11.

WHAT ARE YOU PRODUCING WITH RIGHT NOW? IS IT ALL ON THE MPC?

We're both on the MPC 4000. We used MPCs forever before that, so it's interchangeable without any problems. We also both use a lot of soft synths with Pro Tools; the whole Native Instruments collection; [Spectrasonics] Trilogy for bass; Kontakt 2 a lot; the B4 organ is really good... the Korg stuff, too. We pretty much got rid of all the hardware synths we had and just keep it all in the software world. Oh, and I've got to plug the [Waves] SSL plug-ins. They really do sound like the board.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PRODUCTION STANDBYS YOU RELY ON?

Keep it natural, for one. But also, I program with mixing in mind, because I come from an engineering background. So when I'm programming, I'm thinking, 'OK, I've got to make sure this 808 doesn't conflict with the bass, because it's the same frequency.' A lot of it is just choosing your sounds well, which you can pick up on from listening to guys like [Dr.] Dre, where every sound is deliberate. He picked that kick. Why? Because it cuts through. You've got to pick your frequencies, which is sort of like painting with different colors... you pick the wrong ones and it'll end up muddy. So if you build your stuff from that perspective from the gate, you'll always have a good sonic range.

DO YOU EVER USE SESSION MUSICIANS?

We had this remix to do a couple years ago, but it was a ballad and we were like, 'What the hell are we gonna do with this?' So I thought, 'Let's do the craziest thing we can think of... Let's go get a guy from Times Square playing the paint buckets, and make a beat out of it.' So we got this guy to play the buckets, paid him whatever, and went from there. We had him play for like 10 or 15 minutes and then chopped it up in Pro Tools, got a guitarist in, and had Talib Kweli rap on it. It's still one of my favorite things we've ever done, just because it was so off the wall.



Dirty Swift





Soulwax (Dave Dewaele top right)

## MIXED SIGNALS

Five deck specialists weigh in on the state of digital DJing. WORDS: KEN TAYLOR

Think back to that first time that you saw a laptop onstage at a club. Now think back to the last time you *didn't* see one onstage. It's no stretch to say that the digital world has taken over music production and, to a lesser extent, performance, with hardware/software combinations firmly establishing their place in the live music pantheon beside guitars, turntables, and drum machines.

But are they all that they're cracked up to be? We gathered a unique group of DJs, who use even more diverse gear-and-software setups, to give us the skinny: Ninja Tune producer/DJ Amon Tobin, an early Final Scratch user who has since switched to Numark HDX hard drive/CD-R turntables to manipulate digital files; David Dewaele of Soulwax/2ManyDJs, a true believer in Pioneer CDJs and CD-R technology; DJ Craze, a hip-hop/drum & bass battle DJ who prefers Stanton Final Scratch above all; and DJs Low Budget and Cosmo Baker, analog- and turntable-lovin' hip-hop/funk/electro/soul jocks sold on the strengths of Rane's Serato Scratch Live.

With so many options out there, we asked these five which platforms perform the best, what needs improving, and who still buys records.

"I'M ALWAYS AFRAID THAT IT'S GONNA CRASH AND THEN THERE'S NOTHING."

### WHAT MADE YOU MAKE THE SWITCH TO DIGITAL DJING?

**DJ Craze:** I used to carry two or three record crates on each trip—being a small dude, it sucked having to carry all that. What also sucked was that in Europe, most airlines are stingy with the weight [limit], so I would end up paying extra weight fees. Another good thing about Final Scratch is that I can show up to any gig and be ready for any kind of crowd.

**Amon Tobin:** It was the early days when I had the first whiff of [Final Scratch]. Up until that point I was making my sets with dubplates, and this was my main reason for [switching to] these digital formats... In the end, I'm still bringing my own decks to the shows; it's not exactly making it more lightweight or less cumbersome. The only reason for [using Final Scratch], from my personal point of view, is to have an alternative to cutting acetate every week. I want to play my own stuff that I've made before I get it pressed, and also be able to customize other bits of music.

### WHAT DOES YOUR CURRENT DJ SETUP CONSIST OF?

**Amon Tobin:** What I'm currently using is the Numark HDX [hard-drive/CD turntables]. I was using the CDJs for a while. I started out with Final Scratch, but that was so volatile... I landed on Numark because it's the only turntable that's doing it with the proper 12" platter that moves with the right torque, and it just seems like the closest thing to a [Technics] 1210.

**Cosmo Baker:** Unless I have a new piece of vinyl that I haven't encoded yet—and I still buy vinyl every week—I'll play strictly off of Serato. I just did the Sunglasses Is a Must Tour this spring with A-Trak and Ayres. We used four laptops, four turntables, two Pioneer DJM-909 mixers, and two samplers... it was just crazy. But everything we did was sent through either Serato or Ableton Live. Serato is great because I play a lot with cue points and with programmable loops and whatnot.

### WHAT WERE YOUR EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH DIGITAL SYSTEMS?

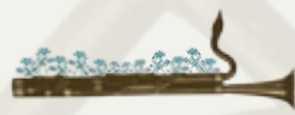
**Amon Tobin:** [I tried] Pioneer CDJs, but I could never get my head around them because I was so used to the 1210s that I just couldn't ever get used to not having a moving platter. Final Scratch was awesome: I could still use my 1210s and I could play all my customized tracks. It



DJ Craze

"I CAN SHOW UP TO ANY GIG AND BE READY FOR ANY KIND OF CROWD."





Cosmo Baker

"UNLESS I HAVE A NEW PIECE OF VINYL... I'LL PLAY OFF STRICTLY OFF OF SERATO."

was a mess for a while because it was in beta testing, but it was a fantastic idea. It worked when it worked, but there were a lot of problems with how the software reacted with the signal path, from the time code on the record to the needle to the tone arm to the USB device to the software itself. There were many, many places where there could be a break in the link.

HOW DID THE CROWDS REACT TO THE NEW FORMAT?

**Amon Tobin:** It was very hard to get it across to people that you were actually doing exactly the same thing. There's a real status quo with gear and equipment, and people are constantly looking at developments in gear and shunning them, saying, "You can't do that" or "That's not proper DJing" or "That's cheating." And until a recognized DJ actually starts using the stuff, then the reaction is very negative. When I started playing on Final Scratch, I had a huge amount of resistance. People would be standing in front of me, booing, and yelling out, "Vinyl is not dead!" without realizing it's the same fucking thing... I see it as a parallel to when electric guitars came out.

**DJ Craze:** The biggest problem was the ignorance of people in the beginning. People really thought that I was just pressing buttons on the computer and the scratches were just magically coming out by themselves. There was actually a couple times in the beginning where I was having technical problems. I remember the computer crashin' on me.



SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE GEAR AND SOFTWARE ITSELF?

**Low Budget:** I've been pretty much just using Serato for almost two years now, and as far as duplicating the experience of spinning vinyl, it's fine... The main difference [between Serato and vinyl DJing] is just having to look for your next song by reading text. You start to associate songs with pictures and sleeves and colors, so when you're looking for a song, you don't really read. But now you have to read, and typing skills come into play. So when I search for a song, and I'll misspell it, I'm like, "Where the hell is it at? Oh, I spelled it wrong." This is like at 2 a.m., after I've been drinking [laughs].

**David Dewaele:** When you bring CDs or vinyl, you're kind of limited to your selection, which I think is a really good thing, as opposed to bringing 20 million MP3s and just browsing through them. Something like Final Scratch lacks another advantage the CDJs have: You can do all these loop points and be really creative with where to come in and out and loop certain things.

**Low Budget:** I didn't try Final Scratch. [It] was a bit ahead of its time, and I just feel like more people have laptops now and are more computer-savvy. When Final Scratch came out, I was broke, and there was no way I was getting a laptop, and I couldn't even comprehend something like that. I almost started [playing with] CDJs but I just couldn't get used to the feel; I was just so used to vinyl.

**Amon Tobin:** One of the things that the Numarks do, that Final Scratch didn't at the time, is let you lock the pitch of a track or assign a pitch to a track on the fly, so you can make proper musical mixes. I started doing key mixes, as well as BPM mixes, so that everything flows musically really well together. That's a really big part of my set now. It's a really good use of technology.



"PEOPLE WOULD BE STANDING IN FRONT OF ME, BOOING, AND YELLING OUT, 'VINYL IS NOT DEAD!' WITHOUT REALIZING IT'S THE SAME FUCKING THING..."

Amon Tobin

DO YOU STILL BUY RECORDS?

**Low Budget:** Not too often. Especially the "flavor of the month" Top 40 stuff, or the bangers that you play in clubs that you play for a little while and then don't really need after. I still go record shopping 'cause I like to talk to people to see what's hot, and to get acapellas and instrumentals and harder-to-find stuff. There's digital record pools and digital promos, too, so I don't go to the record stores as much.

WHAT ARE THE OTHER OBSTACLES WITH THE HARDWARE/SOFTWARE DIGITAL CONTROLLERS?

**David Dewaele:** I'm always afraid that it's gonna crash and then there's nothing. It's basically at a point right now where I don't think it's good enough. I've tried them all out and it seems like it's not there yet.

SO WHAT'S THE IDEAL SITUATION?

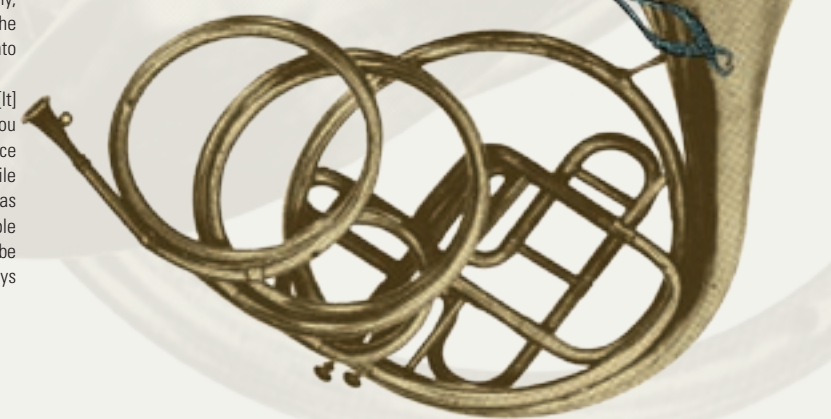
**Amon Tobin:** If I could do away with laptops altogether, that would be a start. I don't particularly like the notion of looking at a laptop when I'm playing records, and I think Serato has gone a long way in their design to help overcome this. For instance, you can scroll through your tracks by dipping your needle in different parts of the vinyl instead of always using your mouse. Because, in the end, we do all come from a background where we're using turntables, and there's something just a bit cold about looking over and mousing through your tracks. I'm hoping that if things can get integrated properly, the way Rane are trying to do it with their mixer, the next stage would be to have the laptop itself (like the hard drive) inside the mixer, so you basically slot your tracks into the mixer and you play them off your decks.

**David Dewaele:** There's this thing called Coverflow [recently purchased by iTunes]. [It] links all your iTunes albums to covers, so you see these huge images of records that you know, and then you click on them and hear the music. It makes the whole experience of choosing music completely different. If I were to have that and be able to DJ while looking at [the images] instead of Times New Roman fonts or whatever... If that was possible, and things could be linked in a more tactile way, that'd be ideal. If people could see the whole library, like it was projected onto a wall—that, I think, would be cool. [With technology], a lot of things are being focused on the wrong way. It's always the flukes that end up being the big successes.

"I STILL GO RECORD SHOPPING 'CAUSE I LIKE TO TALK TO PEOPLE TO SEE WHAT'S HOT..."



Low Budget







Daedelus performs live with his monome.

## MONOME & ME

An instrumental hip-hop maestro provides a glimpse into monome's MIDI mayhem.

WORDS: DAEDELUS

For the past couple of years, I've been fidgeting with an odd invention that an equally odd musician, Brian Crabtree, came up with: The monome 100h. It's a combination of sequencer, Lite-Brite, and sampler with MacGyver-esque possibilities—all addictively simple. Now it's being somewhat mass-made and I wanted to introduce it, so perhaps it'll make some sense of what I might be doing on a stage in a town near you.

First, I like to take songs I've produced in Pro Tools and pick choice bits from them: drum breaks, basslines, synth pads, vocals, complete phrases. Then I'll load these sometimes wildly inappropriate sound selections (as AIFFs) into the mlr, the open-source software built for my monome 100h (my prototype version is a 16 x 16-button grid, which connects to a laptop by MIDI cables; the newer, fancier monome 40h connects by USB), which then allows me to not only play samples simultaneously but also chop the hell out of them on the fly.

The samples or loops are mapped across a row of buttons by dragging and dropping the files on the mlr software screen. The light indicates the playback position of the sample. When I press a button, it cuts to that position of the sample. (The idea is that you visually learn the contour of the sound, like where the kick and snare are located, and can then improvise.)

Once placed, I can trigger the sound on any grid point in these 16 steps, playing the sample from that point. I can mix several groups at once, and have other sounds cancel each other out. Imagine a music measure consisting of four quarter notes: each quarter note is made of four sixteenth notes, so if I map a measure-long sound to a line, each button triggers a different sixteenth-note subdivision.

This leads to a deliriously fun decision-making process: Try to recreate a song light by light, mirroring each flipped sample from my original song? Or completely leave the past behind and fuse the existing with newly created backwards-chopped-screwed-re-pitched bits for a whole new creation?

There's also this crazy little thing, like the button you shouldn't press on the Great Glass Wonkavator from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. By throwing a virtual switch in the mlr software, I can have the computer learn what buttons I press and repeat this process—*Simon* style—in musical time, no matter what sample set I might be choosing from. It allows my fingers a little freedom to flip other samples just as vigorously, which can lead to quite a racket.

Unsettling? Good, because it becomes a mad mix after enough bashing at light buttons. It's all at your fingertips, literally, as every little measured flip is solidly in your control; and it's better than some other fancy controllers because you don't have to constantly stare at the screen. This way, you don't have to see my face illuminated solely by laptop light—which is very unflattering, I've been told.

[www.monome.org](http://www.monome.org), [www.myspace.com/daedelusdarling](http://www.myspace.com/daedelusdarling)



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CD-Quality Stereo Microphone for iPod



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## VIPER FANTASTIC

XLR8R.com's resident tech guys get fancy for fall.

WORDS: ROGER THOMASSON

Don't want to wait until next month to get the skinny on the hottest new music gear? Log on to Viper Fantastic, XLR8R's official tech blog. Editors Roger Thomasson and James Lee prowl the web, scour press releases, and hassle publicists for all the latest in music gadget news. Synths, speakers, MP3 players—as long as it creates, plays, or projects music, they've got it covered. The guys also get down and dirty with geeked-out artists like Herbert, Zero 7, and Matmos, talking shop and snapping pics of their pedal boards and Powerbooks. Here Roger Thomasson tantalizes techies with a few Viper Fantastic-approved toys for the fall season.

[www.xlr8r.com/viperfantastic](http://www.xlr8r.com/viperfantastic)

### 1. LOGITECH Z-10 INTERACTIVE SPEAKER SYSTEM

**MSRP: \$150; [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)**

It used to be that speakers were nothing more than a set of tweeters, woofers, and drivers. Then the PC came along and manufacturers added power buttons and volume controls. Behold the next generation. The 30-watt Logitech Z-10 system is jam-packed with a host of geeky extras: a digilog clock, ID3 track information, touch screen, internet radio and playlist presets, bi-amped two-way speakers, digital crossover, and a whole bunch of cables. Now if we could only get these speakers to turn themselves up when the iPod party starts bumpin'.

### 2. NATIVE INSTRUMENTS AUDIO KONTROL 1 MIDI INTERFACE

**MSRP: \$299; [www.native-instruments.com](http://www.native-instruments.com)**

If audio hardware were judged on looks alone, the **Audio Kontrol 1** would be a shoo-in for Miss Universe. Sleek and sexy, this audio/MIDI interface scores big points for pretty. Fortunately, all that style is backed up with some substance. It's got two balanced inputs with individual gain controls, Cirrus Logic 24/192 KHz A/D converters, A/B headphone outputs, and full versions of some sweet NI software. What we're most excited about, though, are the three assignable hard buttons and controller knob. We're gonna make sure to hyperlink one of them straight to Viper Fantastic.

### 3. BOSS MICRO BR PALMTOP RECORDING STUDIO

**MSRP: \$319.50; [www.rolandus.com](http://www.rolandus.com)**

Good news for all you nomadic singer-songwriters out there. Here's a new mobile recording device that's—you guessed it—just a smidgen bigger than an iPod. Skeptical? Before you banish the Boss **MICRO BR** to the kids' table, check out its features. With two record/input tracks, four playback tracks, and 32 virtual tracks, it'll take more than a gospel choir to max this one out (although we recommend an upgrade to the included 128MB SD card). Built-in rhythm loops, time stretch, and on-board effects mean you can beef up your tunes without ever turning on a computer. Throw in a built-in mic and a guitar tuner, and you're ready for some serious passenger-seat production.

### 4. TREKSTOR VIBEZ MP3 PLAYER

**MSRP: \$199-229; [www.trekstor.de](http://www.trekstor.de)**

TrekStor might not be the most familiar name on the gadget front, but it's shaping up to be an exciting one. The **Vibez** is their latest MP3 assault, and judging by the specs, it looks to be primed for a blitzkrieg on Apple Island. There's a 20-hour replaceable lithium-ion battery, JPEG viewer, visualization suite, crossfader, line-in, built-in mic, and an optional FM tuner. For all those format geeks out there, the Vibez supports MP3, WMA, WAV, OGG, FLAC, and DRM9/10. For everyone else—don't worry about it. You're covered. Oh, and as for that futuro-stealth-bomber style? Yeah, we dig it. Available in 8 and 15GB capacities.



WEDNESDAY NIGHT'S SET.



& THURSDAY'S SET.



& FRIDAY'S SET.



& SATURDAY'S SET.



Learn more about the iCDX by visiting  
[WWW.NUMARK.COM/ICDX](http://WWW.NUMARK.COM/ICDX)

iCDX: Choose your source. You decide.

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Scratch Live™ is a trademark of the Serato™ Corporation Limited and is not included with the iCDX.



## OTTOMATIC

**Fixed Noise OTTO Sound Library**

**MSRP: \$199; [www.fixednoise.com](http://www.fixednoise.com)**

Designed by weird-shit poster boy Otto Von Schirach, **OTTO** is a library of more than 4GB of customized instruments, loops, and samples. Every sound represented in a loop or sequence instrument can also be used as an individual hit, meaning that whether you're going for a quick fix or building from the ground up, there's something here for everyone ("everyone" being a relative term, of course). The program uses (and ships with) a special version of Native Instruments' Kontakt 2 sampler, pop this thing in your computer and you'll be making music that sounds like R2D2 falling down a flight of stairs in no time flat. *Evan Shamon*



IT'LL COST A GRIP TO LOOK LIKE A MONSTER TOOL.



## TOOL TIME

**Oakley/Motorola O ROKR Bluetooth Receiver Sunglasses**

**MSRP: \$249; [www.oakley.com](http://www.oakley.com), [www.motorola.com](http://www.motorola.com)**

A few snowboarders dug the Oakley Thump's sunglasses/MP3 player combo, but most of us thought, "Gee, I already have an iPod and 10-dollar shades." Motorola and Oakley heard your feeble cries and built Bluetooth reception and controls into the **O ROKR**. Pair it with your phone, iPod, or other MP3-playing device and it pumps stereo voice calls and music down the articulated arms to a pair of earbuds. You'll need to shell out for a Bluetooth transmitter for your iPod as well, which means it'll cost a grip to eliminate one measly wire and look like a monster tool. *Rob Geary*

AESTHETICALLY, THIS LITTLE MACHINE IS SLAMMING.



## ITRACTIVE

**Gemini iTrax iPod DJ Mixer**

**MSRP: \$229; [www.geminidj.com](http://www.geminidj.com)**

I hung up my DJ mitts long ago, but the excitement of testing Gemini **iTrax** iPod mixer got me so hyped that I actually had a fleeting dream of getting back into DJing. Fleeting indeed. Aesthetically, this little machine is slamming. It looks so good with my stereo that everyone who enters the house can't help but comment on its seductive, sleek exterior. But the fact is that it's just not much fun. iPods are meant to be held, so when they're cradled in the mixer, you end up poking at the buttons instead of gently rubbing them with your thumb. Plus, a DJ mixer is supposed to give you the freedom to create: iTrax has all the elements of a standard DJ mixer (cue, cross fader, headphone jack, two lines on each channel, gain, equalizer knobs) but without the ability to pitch the tracks up or down, it's kinda just a glorified iPod dock. *Brianna Pope*

## BOX FRESH

**M-Audio Black Box Reloaded Guitar Interface**

**MSRP: \$329.99; [www.m-audio.com](http://www.m-audio.com)**

Thank the guitar gods for this killer little box of interface magic. The M-Audio **Black Box Reloaded** is definitely the most comprehensive, minimal, and above all, convenient guitar system I've used in a damn long time. Featuring over 40 different amp sounds, from the coveted Fender Bassman to the Hiwatt DR-103, you can utilize it as a powerhouse practice amp (simply plug it into your speakers) or play directly into any software application as a recording interface. In addition to its host of stellar amp choices, it also comes packed with 43 synced effects ranging from customizable tremolo to wahs of all sorts. If that doesn't satiate your rock palate, the Black Box comes equipped with 99 drum patterns as well, making sure that even the most misunderstood kid out in the sticks can jam. Shredding. *Fred Miketa*



## REWIND

**45 Twister 7" DJ Tool**

**MSRP: \$22.99; [www.compost-records.com](http://www.compost-records.com)**

Digital DJing is almost the norm in clubland and we understand why. Show up to the gig with a laptop or iPod plus your interface, and a DJ set is as expansive as your hard drive allows. It's easy to forget that 7" 45 RPM vinyl was the original lightweight, portable set. With the continuing popularity of reggae 45 riddims, and the large numbers of beat-diggin' single fiends, the 7" is still a vital DJ tool. The **45 Twister** (designed by Germany's DJ Enne, distributed by Compost Recordings) consists of a plastic adapter dome affixed to a soft rubber mat that sits snugly on a 12" disc. The single stays put on the mat, allowing a DJ to cleverly cut, scratch, and juggle singles. DJs—snap to it! *Tomas Palermo*

THE 7" IS STILL A VITAL DJ TOOL.

## BURNING S.A.G.E.

**Ilio/Spectrasonics S.A.G.E. Xpanders Plug-Ins**

**MSRP: \$99 each; [www.spectrasonics.net](http://www.spectrasonics.net); [www.ilio.com](http://www.ilio.com)**

The Stylus RMX beat-making module is already an efficient tool, but with **S.A.G.E. Xpanders**, its usefulness and adaptability is multiplied enormously. More than mere loops collections, each pack contains fully developed beat patterns, with every parameter fully adjustable and tweakable. Bashiri Johnson's *Ethno Techno* contains world-influenced percussion and a variety of rare instruments recorded in a high-quality, professional environment. Slow these grooves down and apply effects to create bizarre, ambient textures. *Stark Raving Beats* is full of slamming live drums with isolated snares, kicks, hats, toms, and FX. Ranging in tempo from 105 to 170 BPM, it's the best of both worlds; the spontaneous feel and power of a live drummer with digital control and flexibility. Dance Xpanders not your thing? *Skippy's Big Bad Beats* is geared towards the hip-hop/R&B market and for that, it's an invaluable resource. *Alexander Posell*



EVEN IF YOU'VE BEEN LIVING UNDER A ROCK FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS YOU'VE HEARD OF ABLETON LIVE.

## DON'T TRIP

**Griffin Technology BlueTrip iPod Bluetooth Transmitter Kit**

**MSRP: \$99; [www.griffintechnology.com](http://www.griffintechnology.com)**

Our house is horrible for radio reception, so to get our iTunes playing on the living-room stereo, FM transmitters don't really do the trick. Enter Griffin's **BlueTrip** Bluetooth transmitter, where the iPod literally becomes my remote control. Via simple RCA outs (or S/PDIF optical), the sleek receiver unit (with built-in antenna) hooks up to the stereo's auxiliary channel. The tiny transmitter plugs right into the back of any dockable iPod and in seconds it can start sending your iTunes across the room. The range is amazing (about 30 feet), and the transmitter can also work with Bluetooth-enabled headphones and other receiver devices equipped with A2DP technology. A superb way to keep the music flowin' throughout the house. *Derek Grey*



## LIVE AT 6

**Ableton Live 6 Production/Performance Software**

**MSRP: \$599 (boxed version); [www.ableton.com](http://www.ableton.com)**

Even if you've been living under a rock for the past five years—or making it, for that matter—you've heard of Ableton's live performance tool/digital audio workstation, **Live**. The newest iteration brings a host of major features: an all-new sampler (called, fittingly, Sampler), movie import (for scoring video/film footage), multi-core and multi-processor support (on both PC and Mac), and the Essential Instrument Collection—a multi-gigabyte library of sampled instruments for use with Live's built-in Simpler. There are tons of minor upgrades as well: the ability to warp multiple clips, import non-DRM AAC files, and a host of new effects. Hear that sound? It's your wallet quietly whimpering once again. *Evan Shamon*







**FUN FACTORY**

**Arturia Analog Factory Software Synthesizer**  
MSRP: \$249; [www.arturia.com](http://www.arturia.com)

Arturia is known for their incredibly accurate simulations of classic synths, which utilize True Analog Emulation (TAE) technology for near-perfect frequency and harmonic response. With **Analog Factory**, they combine 2000 of their best presets into one affordable volume. The result? Instant, cross-referenced access to an amazing selection of sounds, but without the depth of the individual interfaces. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as the full-version controls can sometimes be opaque, and Analog Factory's homogenized interface is easy to use while still allowing for a good amount of tweaking. Cleverly, the presets are grouped not only by instrument, characteristics, and type, but also by CPU usage, allowing for swift, intelligent choices in (for example) a laptop-type scenario. Much like a "best-of" compilation from a band, Analog Factory saves you the digging and dollars, and allows for instant gratification. *Alexander Posell*

MOVE OVER, RANE, THIS MIXER REIGNS AS THE NEW DOMINATRIX OF MIX SORCERY.



**MIX MAGIC**

**Soundcraft Urei 1603 DJ Mixer**  
MSRP: \$999; [www.ureidj.com](http://www.ureidj.com)

The folks at Soundcraft brought DJ culture to life in the '70s with the Urei 1620 rotary mixer. With the Urei **1603**, they've taken a similar-sounding schematic and added the features that the current top jocks demand of a club-aimed console. Four stereo channels with an ultra-harmonic three-band isolator EQ set the new standard in audio manipulation, while a vast, comprehensive cue section makes complex track monitoring easy. A VCA-based crossfader's amplifier circuit reduces any lingering noise while delicately blending the performance at hand. Line, mic, or phono options allow DJ or producers to capture sound from all types of sources, as aux sends on each channel easily adapt to various processors. Move over, Rane; this mixer reigns as the new dominatrix of mix sorcery. *Praxis*

AKOUSTIK PIANO 1.1 RAISES THE BAR IN BOTH SOUND AND STYLE.



**PIANO, MAN**

**Native Instruments Akoustik Piano 1.1 Software Synthesizer**  
MSRP: \$349; [www.native-instruments.com](http://www.native-instruments.com)

Until now, the vast majority of piano plug-ins on the market—modeled or sampled—have sounded pretty weak compared to the real deal, but Native Instruments' **Akoustik Piano 1.1** raises the bar in both sound and style. Three grand pianos and one upright have been meticulously sampled top-to-bottom—even the subtle sounds and harmonics of the pedals are present—making for a tone virtually indistinguishable from the real thing. The software is a bit demanding in terms of space and processing, but moving the samples to an external drive neatly takes care of both storage and CPU considerations. On a fast computer, Akoustik Piano 1.1 performs wonderfully in a wide variety of sequencing programs, or as a stand-alone synth. If you don't have the time or money to rent a studio or a pianist, then this software is by far the best choice for producers at any level. *Alexander Posell*



**DROPPIN' SCIENCE**

**M-Audio SynchronyScience Connectiv Interface and Torq DJ Software/Hardware**  
MSRP: \$299.95; [www.m-audio.com](http://www.m-audio.com)

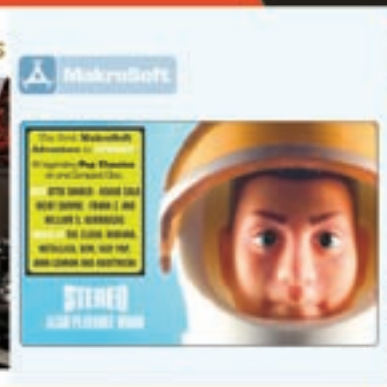
Stanton Final Scratch, Rane Serato Scratch Live, and the Pioneer SVJ-DL01 changed DJing infinitely. Now M-Audio's new DJ division SynchronyScience steps up to innovate with its **Torq** software and **Connectiv** hardware unit, designed by tech guru/Trigger Finger creator Chad Carrier. Sold as either a laptop-based DJ tool, or with vinyl and CD control discs, Torq is packed with features such as on-the-fly looping, sampling, autosync (allowing two songs to be mixed from one turntable or CD deck), simultaneous use of three built-in effects, and auto-beat matching. You can plug an iPod into Connectiv and immediately access your MP3 library, or play any WAV, WMA, or AAC file. Torq supports third-party VST effects and can be used as a ReWire device within Ableton Live, Logic, and others. We're talking totally sick live remix and layering possibilities. Torq gives digi-DJs maximum G-force! *Tomas Palermo*



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MAJOR TOON UP

**Toontrack dhf EZ Drummer Drum Plug-In**  
MSRP: \$179; [www.ezdrummer.com](http://www.ezdrummer.com)

Despite a slew of fairly horrendous spelling and grammar conventions, Toontrack's **dhf EZ Drummer** (we don't get it either) provides one of the most intriguing virtual drum programs on the market. Essentially a combination of various high-end drum kits played by various high-end drummers, this plug-in allows you to put together live-sounding drum tracks in seconds. The MIDI library is large, meaning that thousands of drum patterns are at your fingertips and ready to be dropped into your host sequencer. Microphones are adjustable, allowing you to control levels between mics and ambience with a few clicks. Many of the included beats are generic, but the sheer variety of loops (and, of course, the ability to chop 'em up) means you should be able to find something to make heads nod pretty quickly. *Evan Shamoan*



FEELING BLUE

**Anycom BluNa iPod Nano Bluetooth Transmitter**  
MSRP: \$120; [www.anycom.com](http://www.anycom.com)

Anycom is ready to grant your wish for a wireless iPod with the **BluNa** Bluetooth wireless adapter. This tiny transmitter, obviously styled for the Nano, will zap audio to Bluetooth-enabled headphones, stereo receivers, or your PC (for instance, it worked well with the aforementioned O ROKR sunglass/receiver combo); provided that you have the right equipment on the other end, this little box lets your music make the leap. You can also attach it to a full-size iPod or even the deceased Mini, where it looks a little strange, but still does the job simply and perfectly. *Rob Geary*



YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF USING IT MORE THAN PREVIOUSLY PLANNED.

WHO'S THE MAC?

**Apple Mac Pro Desktop Computer**  
MSRP: \$2499 (base model); [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

*The transformation is complete, master.* Apple's high-end **Mac Pro** desktop line has finally gone Intel, and music nerds are beside themselves. The big stuff is already running native: Logic, Reason, Cubase, Pro Tools, and Live all run at blistering speeds (Logic at 1.8 times faster than it did on a Quad G5, Live 6 more than two times faster). While a new case to replace the "cheese grater" design would have been nice, the insides have been renovated to accommodate up to four drives, two terabytes of storage, and, of course, two dual core Intel Xeon processors. Get ready to have a new significant other. *Evan Shamoan*



TUNE IN

**Belkin TuneTalk Stereo Recording Tool for iPod Video**  
MSRP: \$69.99; [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)

Recording onto your iPod couldn't be easier with the Belkin **TuneTalk Stereo**. Its one-touch record button keeps you quick on the draw and because it's so convenient, you might find yourself using it more than previously planned. With a fully charged iPod, TuneTalk can record continuously for up to two hours (1.2 GB of WAV-quality audio). If that's not enough, hook it up via USB to an external drive. Its omni-directional microphones, despite their tiny size, more than do their job; if you don't agree, there's an external mic input, too, as well as an auto gain feature to boost your signal. And with its additional cable (with 3.5mm stereo-input jack), TuneTalk can even be used to record from a mixer, perfect for off-the-board gig recordings. Its only major downside? Sometimes the mic is *too* sensitive, and makes it difficult to isolate a voice in noisy locales. *Marc Houle and Veronica Vasicka*

GOING OFF IN SAN FRANCISCO



OCTOBER

- 10/5: **Adult., Hardplace**
- 10/7: **The Futureheads, Cold War Kids, Street To Nowhere**
- 10/14: **Method Man**
- 10/19: **Stones Throw 10th Year Anniversary Madlib, Peanut Butter Wolf, J.Rocc, Percee P**
- 10/20: **Manhead/Headman**
- 10/27: **ESG**
- 10/28: **KMFDM, CombiChrist, Panic Drives Human Herds**
- 10/31st: **Modular Halloween Party with Van She, Soft Lightes, Frisco Disco DJ's**

NOVEMBER

- 11/1: **Justice (Vice), MSTRKRFT**
- 11/3: **Mute Records Presents The Knife**
- 11/8: **Brand New Heavies**
- 11/9: **Kid Koala, Fog**
- 11/11: **Dr. Octagon/ Kool Keith**
- 11/14: **Lady Sovereign**
- 11/17: **Hot Chip**
- 11/18: **The Slits (Reunion)**

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## *Love is War*

A documentary photographer finds his true calling on the battlefields of Brooklyn.

WORDS: BRIANNA POPE  
PHOTOS: BOOGIE

Serbian photographer Vladimir Milivojevac (better known as Boogie) won a green card lottery in 1998 that allowed him to move from his home in war-torn Belgrade to a hipster 'hood in Brooklyn. But this 37-year-old, who once dreamed of being a war photographer, found his calling on an unlikely battlefield: the ghettos of Bushwick. His new book, *It's All Good* (Powerhouse; hardcover, \$35), is page after black-and-white page of heartbreaking, gut-wrenching imagery from the bleakest depths of urban America.

Like his favorite photojournalist, Italy's Paolo Pellegrin, Boogie has not emerged from the battlefield unscathed, but he has no regrets. "I became addicted to the whole adrenaline rush of hanging out with crackheads and drug dealers," he says of making the book. "Let's face it, war photographers are addicted to the adrenaline. It has nothing to do with trying to change things and make a difference." Admittedly, he also ignored people's advice to maintain boundaries. "The deeper you go, the better the photo," he asserts.

"It was weird when I finished the book project," he says. "There was a huge emptiness. I got depressed for several months. I was scared; I thought I was gone, but now I'm able to find beauty in normal things again." Boogie says he's feeling back to normal, but not for long; by press time, he will have visited Chernobyl and the *favelas* of Brazil.

Seen here, exclusive photos and outtakes from *It's All Good: Photographs by Boogie* (Miss Rosen Editions/Powerhouse), out now. All photos 2003-2005. [www.artcoup.com](http://www.artcoup.com), [www.powerhousebooks.com](http://www.powerhousebooks.com)





**IS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY THAT MAKES PEOPLE OPEN UP TO YOU?**

Definitely. I really get along well with people who are weird: Nazis, gangsters—I feel right at home among them. I'm from Serbia; it's a fucked-up country. We had 10 years of war. I'm not afraid of guns; they're part of our culture. For the gangsters, it's probably weird for them to see a white guy walking around, but they approached me and found I wasn't afraid. They like me.







**IS THERE BEAUTY IN YOUR PHOTOS?**  
I think so. I don't judge my subjects. It could be me, it could be you; you never know how you may end up.





**ARE YOU EVER HAUNTED BY YOUR SUBJECTS?**  
When you're behind the camera, nothing can touch you. You can be scared to death, but your hands won't shake. This is a different dimension. But when you go home and try to sleep, sometimes it comes back to you. It definitely gets to you later. I get depressed. It's very heavy.



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Babycham, Lukie D, Voicemail, Soltex 3000, Macka Diamond and many more...



## Federation



## Album Reviews 11.06



**HYPHY 2.0:**  
**WILL THE WORLD'S EARS**  
**PERK UP NOW?**

**DJ SHADOW**  
**THE OUTSIDER**  
Universal/US/CD

**FEDERATION**  
**IT'S WHATEVA**  
Warner Bros/US/CD

This was supposed to be the year that hyphy went national, but with the books about to close on 2006, the Bay Area hip-hop movement has yet to live up to its hype. E-40's *My Ghetto Report Card* sold well out of the gate but didn't cause any major waves; deserving albums by San Quinn and Traxamillion, meanwhile, barely registered outside of Cali.

So, where to now? Was "Tell Me When To Go" the sideshow set's big moment in the sun, or is there more in store? The Yay's most renowned producers, DJ Shadow and Rick Rock, could hold the answers. Shadow is a veritable outsider to street hip-hop circles, and his re-emergence with Keak Da Sneak and Turf Talk (on the late-'05 single "3 Freaks") was initially met with confusion; Rock is a veritable Dre of the Bay, and one of hyphy's architects. Despite their differences, both have crafted somewhat parallel albums that spotlight the New Bay sound while going far above and beyond its bounds.

Referencing the genre-bending producer's relationship with hip-hop, *The Outsider* is an apt title for DJ Shadow's latest. His album is divided into acts: a pair of moody intros are followed by a chunk of thick, bouncy thizz music featuring vocals by Federation, Animanatics, and Nump, along with "3 Freaks." Then things start to get weird. "Broken Levee Blues," a blues-rock instrumental, segues into "Artifact," a Shadow-ized take on Black Flag-style hardcore; this is followed by "Backstage Girl," a hip-hop take on groupie-lovin' boogie rock featuring Little Brother's Phonte Coleman. All good up to that point, but it's hard to imagine heads who buy this record for "3 Freaks" digging the new age-y "What Have I Done," or *Endroducing* disciples swallowing the Coldplay-ish Brit rock of "You Made It," which follows in the second half. A Neptunes-y club track featuring Q-Tip and Lateef the Truth Speaker ("Enuff") and an E-40 joint ("Dat's My Part") strive to reign it all in, but, ultimately, the end result is too far-reaching to truly make sense.

The underrated Rick Rock is under somewhat less pressure than the critically acclaimed Shadow. For one thing, his name isn't out there—instead, he's the mastermind behind Federation, a three-MC crew with whom he

helped set off the New Bay era on the 2004 single "Hyphy." While MCs Doonie Baby, Goldy, and Stresmatic bring an M.O.P.-like energy to the table, *It's Whateva* is clearly Rick Rock's show. Formerly a hired gun for the likes of Jay-Z, Busta Rhymes, and others, Rock has clearly been itching to unleash a masterpiece of his own, and he's found his muses in the eager Federation MCs. *It's Whateva* is a sort of multi-dimensional *The Chronic* for the Bay: the high-energy electro stomp of the best hyphy tracks is here ("18 Dummy," "Move It," and so on), but so is live instrumentation ("Black Roses," featuring Travis Barker on drums, is possibly the best rock-rap track since the *Judgment Night* soundtrack), and moody Southern soul ("When I Was Your Man"). Clocking in at nearly 70 minutes, *Whateva* feels a bit long, but that's 'cause the energy level hardly ever dips. If Rock and his cohorts can't bring hyphy to the forefront of hip-hop with this bangathon—from to back, it's one of the year's strongest rap albums—then it must be time to go back to the drawing board. *Jesse Serwer*





# Acid Reign

## ACID REIGN

### TIME & CHANGE

Alpha Pup/US/CD

Hip-hop duo Acid Reign is no secret in their hometown of L.A. Their new album, *Time & Change*, will likely be the release that gets the rest of the country talking, too. Heavily influenced by their mentors at the Project Blowed open-mic workshop, MCs Gajah and Beond typically keep their flows quick without being bound by one-dimensional subject matter. For these two, pondering the fragility of life ("Comfort Zone") and trying to get the crowd moving ("Party Tonight") are all part of the program. And when they team up with veteran Project Blowed folks like Ellay Khule (on the wild-style cut "Acid Hip-Hop"), they prove that they can hang with the best of 'em. With top Angeleno producers Daddy Kev, Fat Jack, Omid, and others laying down the crisp drum patterns and funky loops, the scorching beats are an equal part of this album's appeal. *Max Herman*



## 120 DAYS

### 120 DAYS

Smalltown Supersound-Vice/US/CD

Wonder what Radiohead would have sounded like if they had discovered big, room-filling synthesizers during their U2-worshipping phase? The answer is 120 Days, a Norwegian quartet that creates giant, sweeping, rock epics powered by a thick distillation of guitars, bass, and rumbling analog synths. Rather than evoke new wave, these young rockers sound like late-'70s techno-punks mingling with mid-'70s prog-rockers over a 21st century Pro Tools rig, banging out cell phone-waving anthems for hipsters and nerds alike. *Rob Geary*

## A GUY CALLED GERALD

### PROTO ACID: THE BERLIN SESSIONS

Laboratory Instinct/GER/CD

There's no denying the importance of Gerald Simpson's contributions to modern electronic music (see 808 State and "Voodoo Ray"), but his last full-length was a bit of a letdown. Stylistically scattered, it signaled a slump for the prolific producer that *Proto Acid* handily calls bullshit on. Here are 20-plus brand-new tracks of sizzling techno recorded in one smooth session. They're as fresh as anything coming from Berlin, and readymade for the dancefloor. Shooting at multiple targets never guarantees a hit, but luckily this one nails it. *Rachel Shimp*

## ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

### HOLLINNDAGAIN

Paw Tracks/US/CD

This reissued live record captures Animal Collective in their most undomesticated form. The band jumps between murmured chants and percussive assaults that could break every bone in the body. It's equal parts slapstick and outright horror. They yelp faux-Indian chants and thwack tribal rhythms on "Pride and Fight," then toy with splotchy white noise and *ribbits* on "There's an Arrow" and "Lablakely Dress." Be warned: *Hollinndagain* is strictly for cult fans and anthropologists. *Cameron Macdonald*

## BEENIE MAN

### UNDISPUTED

Virgin/US/CD

Like many dancehall albums, Beenie Man's *Undisputed* tries too hard to please everyone. There's the Akon-aided pop/R&B crossover of "Girls," Scott Storch's hip-hop production on "Dutty Wine Girl," and a reggaeton track entitled "Fire." It's over dancehall riddims, however, that Beenie Man shines, and deviations from this formula serve only to cloud his product with distracting, unnecessary filler. The clever self-editing of "Hmm Hmm" makes for a great lead single but other than "Heart Attack" (on the splendid Global riddim) and the new wave-y "Beenie Man," there's little substance to make this release stand out among countless others. *Jesse Serwer*

## BIBIO

### HAND CRANKED

Mush/US/CD

Stephen "Bibio" Wilkinson can make any acoustic guitar sound mystical and enchanted just by recording it on a broken tape deck. On *Fi* his poorly magnetized recordings of pastoral folk melodies were oddly beautiful in their frailty. *Hand Cranked* continues with that no-fi studio method, but this time he fleshes out his songs. "Cherry Go Round" is a dizzying play of guitar loops, while the foggy, shoe-gazer harmonies of "Black Country Blue" are brilliantly evanescent. Several songs wouldn't be memorable if it weren't for their ancient sound quality. But in our age of bloodless pop productions, Wilkinson is still welcome. *Cameron Macdonald*

## THE BLACK NEON

### ARTS & CRAFTS

Memphis Industries-Arts & Crafts/UK/CD

English label Memphis Industries has built a reputation for cavity-causing pop, be it the spazzed-out, sample-heavy cheerleading of The Go! Team or the matching skirts and girl-group sounds of The Pipettes. The Black Neon, the project of 'stache-rocking solo artist Steve Webster, hits a chronological midpoint between its labelmates, aping aspects of the droning, psychedelic music of the '70s and '80s—like a jam session between Neu! and Brian Wilson. Webster builds repetitive, shimmering lines out of science filmstrip-style synths while harmonies of a more psychedelic persuasion creep throughout the tightly constructed album. *Patrick Sisson*

## THE BLOOD BROTHERS

### YOUNG MACHETES

V2/US/CD

The Blood Brothers have never been ones to hold back. But their latest release, the frantic *Young Machetes*, finds Seattle's finest post-hardcore noiseniks indulging in a whole new kind of excess: the big, fat, bloated record. When they fire on all cylinders, with tracks like the album-opening "Set Fire to the Face on Fire," the Bros make their anger sound sexy, delivering razorblade rock with the sass of a made-up pop tart on *TRL*. But there's just too much to digest on this 15-track firework, forcing even the album's strongest tracks to get lost in the shuffle. *Robbie Mackey*

## BOLA

### SHAPES

Skam/UK/CD

Originally released in 2000 on a criminally rare triple-pack of 12"s, *Shapes* was pressed with a label including nothing more than geometric forms superimposed on a black background. With this CD reissue, Bola finally takes credit for crafting a foreboding soundtrack to a streamlined future lifted straight out of the pages of a William Gibson novel. While still musically relevant, this futurist tack almost seems quaint when compared to the present—a world in which pandemic flu, dirty nukes, and ever-encroaching government surveillance seem much more plausible than any dystopian technopolis that Bola could dream up. *Brock Phillips*

## CL SMOOTH

### AMERICAN ME

Shaman Work/US/CD

While it doesn't deliver on the promise of advance singles "Bars of Fury" and "Smoke In The Air," CL Smooth's solo debut is more than an efficient comeback album for the Mecca Don. With beats from mostly un-hyped producers (Rsonist, Kaygee, and Tramp) and no guest appearances, the 11-song effort pulls no punches but, unfortunately, does little to pull in listeners who aren't already entrenched in the Pete Rock and CL Smooth legacy. Whether it's post-9/11 America, praising Momma, or playing the don, CL doesn't deviate from the flow of his mid-'90s heyday, delivering lines like an old friend. *Jesse Serwer*

## CLARK

### BODY RIDDLE

Warp/UK/CD

*Body Riddle* doesn't feature as much synthetic critter twitter as Chris Clark's 2001 debut, nor does it sound as strangulated as some of that album's more straitjacketed and jacking tracks. Then again, *Body Riddle* doesn't struggle within itself nearly as much as Clark's 2003 sophomore ambient meandering. What before sounded forced now swings refined. "Herr Bar," "Frau Wav," "Ted," "Vengeance Drools," "Night Knuckles"—these highlights recall everything from fuzz-filter funk to the spiny mecho-organic convulsions of Richard D. James. *Tony Ware*

## DAN THE AUTOMATOR PRESENTS 2K7

Decon/US/CD

As sure as Allen Iverson's got bunnies, basketball has been ingrained in hip-hop culture since it started out in the park. So it's only fitting that the makers of the tightest hoops videogame series would team up with a roster of heavy spitters like Ghostface, Lupe Fiasco, Mos Def, E-40, and innovative hip-hop producer Dan the Automator (Gorillaz, Handsome Boy Modeling School) for a proper soundtrack to their latest installation for Xbox and Playstation. Though the concept sounds better on paper, Slim Thug's "I Love This Game" boasts a swagger that would amp any NBA team into a pre-game frenzy. *Rico "Superbizee" Washington*

## DOSH

### THE LOST TAKE

Anticon/US/CD

Dosh stitches together music-box melodies, nimble beats, and acoustic guitar riffs that smile at the morning sunshine with 10 cups of coffee in the belly. "Um, Circles and Squares" conjures up a toy store image with Fisher Price synth sounds. "Fireball" has Dosh playing a synth-pop jaunt with a sample of a teacher giving a peculiar lesson about empires, while "Unemployed Blues" grooves to a rhythm that snaps like a brick of firecrackers. The record's sweetness risks giving listeners cavities at times, but the musicianship is admirable enough to warrant repeat spins. *Cameron Macdonald*

## DRUMCORPS

### GRIST

Cock Rock Disco/GER/CD

Drumcorps is Aaron Spectre's metal/grindcore/breakcore/fractured breaks project, and it's absolutely killer. A smash-up from the best of many worlds, Drumcorps draws the connection between thrash (and almost prog-) drumming and the possibilities of an amen break, then wraps it in a sample-heavy wash of guitar, vocals, and screams. The whole thing is ballistic, delivering the pure energy that has always been present in breakcore in a uniquely clean and raw way. Spectre is one of the world's most talented musicians today and it's awe-inspiring to hear him at his least restrained. *Matt Earp*

## EMPEROR MACHINE

### VERTICAL TONES AND HORIZONTAL NOISE

DC Recordings/UK/CD

Working solo as Emperor Machine, Andy Meecham's second LP is another departure from the acid revivalism that marks his work as Chicken Lips. *Vertical Tones* is a compendium of 12"s released over the past year, all produced with a loving nostalgia for vintage '70s analog production. Tracks like the epic "Roller Daddy" are enjoyable only on a kitschy level. But others are canny updates on the era, and solid floor bangers in their own right; "Lift Up Chong and See" plays like the future of electro-house with its the tightly zippered synths, cowbells, and robo-mix vocals. *Anna Balkrishna*

## FS BLUMM

### SUMMER KLING

Morr Music/GER/CD

## GUTHER

### SUNDET

Morr Music/GER/CD

Morr Music maintains its flow of soul-tickling downtempo vibrations, the first of which comes from multi-instrumentalist FS Blumm (Frank Schultge). On *Summer Kling*, backed by a cast of seasoned collaborators, Schultge offers a sublime array of smooth and tranquil jazz that pacifies like an aimless stroll after a rainstorm. The Guthier duo makes its sophomore appearance on Morr, sliding over their signature blend of quasi-cohesive musings in a dynamic swirl of gritty, lo-fi rock grooves and carefree acoustic meanderings. Like many Morr releases, even the melancholy moments here make you feel warm and fuzzy inside. *Doug Morton*

## HONEYCUT

### THE DAY I TURNED TO GLASS

Quannum/US/CD

A hodge-podge rock/funk trio cuts an album for an indie label headed by a member of a lauded underground hip-hop group. Yes, Honeycut is an aural dysfunction at the junction that, oddly enough, works. Alt-rocker Tony Sevener (Summercamp), French electro maestro RV Salters (General Elektris), and Bay Area vocalist Bart Davenport (The Loved Ones) all jump in the sack with their musical influences in tow to create a 43-minute record of wanderlust, littered with falsetto, vintage synths, distortion, breaks, brass, and strings. Scritti Politti trapped in a minimum-security psycho ward couldn't have dreamt this one up. *Rico "Superbizee" Washington*



# Freddie Cruger

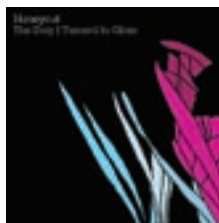
## FREDDIE CRUGER

### SOUL SEARCH

Ubiquity/US/CD

There's an undeniable buoyancy to Freddie Cruger's "Over the Ocean" when the beats come in like giant *bata* drums punctuating the air and Desmond Foster's patois emerges atop the bass-heavy groove. It's just one of 13 exceptionally tight tunes on this full-length debut by the Swedish producer also known as Red Astaire. Cruger invites a slew of guests to display their skills above his dub-, hip-hop-, and jazz-inspired tunes. Atlanta soulster Anthony David sounds great with his choppy scats on "I Wanna Make You Move" and even better on the big beat "New World New Time." Foster returns, as does Swingfly, Linn, and Cee-Rock. The deeply Jamaican "Running From Love," with a brilliant lyrical display by ADL, proves to be the most soulful in Cruger's *Search*, but that doesn't take anything away from the other dozen; on any day any one of them could claim that title. *Derek Beres*





**KID KOALA**  
**YOUR MOM'S FAVORITE DJ**

Ninja Tune/UK/CD  
Humor is everything, as Kid Koala has proven in the past. But so is riffage, something *Your Mom's Favorite DJ* possesses in abundance compared to its funnier predecessors. The result? A sizzling jam, especially on the three smoking crunchers from his new Seattle project Slew ("Test 1," "Test 2," and "Test 3"), which drop fiery blues-hop like sonic hammers. Meanwhile, the mournful piano of "Things'll Be Good Again" keeps the CD's vibe airy and seamless, just the way true-school hip-hop likes it. One of the baddest releases of the year so far. *Scott Thill*



**LIFE FORCE TRIO**  
**LIVING ROOM**

Plug Research/US/CD  
Stuffing fistfuls of eclectic musical influences into his mouth at once, Ammoncontact's Carlos Nino has discovered a whole new flavor. Spaced-out jazz, old-school funk, and indeterminate psychedelia resonate beneath the surface of this superb eight-track offering as it wanders through deep vibraphonic moods and playful, analog daydreams. Along with his partner Dexter Story, Nino brings in a host of instrumentalists to enrich the flow with woodwinds and strings, raising the emotive grandeur of the album to a level that shrugs off any need for classification. *Living Room* is simply a delight to take in. *Doug Morton*



**LINDSTRØM**  
**IT'S A FEEDLITY AFFAIR**

Feedelity-Smalltown Supersound/NOR/CD  
These 11 compositions, by the Oslo-based Hans-Peter Lindstrøm, were originally released on vinyl through his own label, but they now share a home with motorik darts and corporeal sequencing on Smalltown Supersound. While there are obvious Giorgio Moroder arpeggio marauders ("There's a Drink in My Bedroom and I Need a Hot Lady") there's also zonked Floydian guitar on "Cane It for the Original Whities" and an Ibiza breeze on "Another Station," plus the incontrovertibly transportive "I Feel Space." Lindstrøm's astro-disco resides in a pan-temporal orbit between Italo, Balearic, kosmiche, Krautrock, prog, and fusion folk. *Tony Ware*

**LONDON SINFONIETTA**  
**WARP WORKS & TWENTIETH CENTURY MASTERS**

Warp/UK/CD  
When a record pairs the work of admired avant-garde composers with Warp Records electronic artists, discussion gravitates toward the two camps' shared spaces. The work of Squarepusher's Tom Jenkinson bears much more resemblance to the tape looping of Steve Reich than, say, sexy being brought back by Justin Timberlake. Like waiting for your turn in a conversation, the manner in which this record operates—placing compositions side by side instead of attempting misguided mergers—demonstrates a level of shared respect between the two worlds. *Robbie Mackey*

**JOHN MEDESKI AND MATTHEW SHIPP**  
**SCOTTY HARD'S RADICAL RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY**

Thirsty Ear/US/CD  
While most jazz imprints focus on plundering their back catalogs or desperately seeking hot producers to remix said oldies, Thirsty Ear strives to push the art forward with infusions of electronic, hip-hop, and classical elements. Here, inventive keyboardists Medeski and Shipp (with bassist William Parker, turntablist DJ Olive, and drummers Nasheet Waits and Mauricio Takara) have their intriguing motifs transformed by producer/engineer Hard (Kool Keith, Wu-Tang Clan). Hard threads Shipp's and Medeski's oblique shafts of piano and organ anomalies around intricate, robust rhythms. This compellingly strange disc suggests a fruitful path for 21st-century fusion to take. *Dave Segal*

**MEISSNER/SLAVIN/SACHS**  
**INTO THE VOID**

Sub Rosa/BEL/CD  
Inspired by the Kazimierz neighborhood of Krakow, Poland, most of whose Jewish inhabitants died in the Holocaust, *Into The Void* captures the sonic response from three Jewish ambient-music producers: Sebastian Meissner (Klimek, Random Inc., Bizz Circuits), Ran Slavin, and Eran Sachs. Meissner's 11 tense, desolate tracks evoke the hollowed-out feeling of intense sorrow and pity, while also excavating obscure shreds of that culture in John Oswald-esque homage. Over six compositions, the artists show their clicks-and-cuts pedigree with delicately daubed microtonal haikus of riveting content—a heartfelt, abstract tribute to a place irrevocably transformed by hate. *Dave Segal*

**MOUNTAINEER**  
**WHEN THE AIR IS BRIGHT THEY SHINE**

Type/UK/CD  
Diversifying its already wildly eclectic roster, Type now unleashes a breezy indie band. It sounds like radio-lovin' Chicago, but *When the Air* is actually the work of Hamburg-based Henning Wandoff and his like-minded collaborators. With 10 songs in 37 minutes, this is a near-perfect realization of skewed indie pop, with deftly placed, aurally engaging instrumentation and Henning's voice, which glides from gruffness to sweetness, intermittently buttressed by that of a breathy girl. The air is warm, and Mountaineer shines brightly. *Brian Paul*

**GEORGIA ANNE MULDROW**  
**OLES!: FRAGMENTS OF AN EARTH**

Stones Throw/US/CD  
Coming from a family of free-jazz musicians, the daughter of a '60s torch singer, Georgia Anne Muldrow starts out well left-of-center before you hear her rich, neo-soul-style vocals. While there's a certain amount of astral traveling on her debut LP *Olesi*, the writer/singer/musician grounds her '60s-style spiritual outpourings with modern-day boom-bap. The best moments are when this songbird comes down to Earth and emotes. The cathartic post-Katrina dirge "New Orleans" stings with pain and anger, while "Patience," a politics-imbued meditation on losing one's way, could be the mournful follow-up. *Patrick Sisson*



**GLUE**  
**CATCH AS CATCH CAN**

Fat Beats/US/CD  
Any real hip-hoppers in the place? Cardboard-spinning, beatbox-busting, free-style fanatics more at home with a can of Krylon than a case of Pimp Juice? If you've stubbornly managed to avoid the trendy temptations of snap, crunk, or hyphy and would gladly trade a Jacob the Jeweler timepiece for a pristine copy of "It's Just Begun," then Midwestern hip-hop heroes Glue are your flavor, kid. "We've got a lot to say and even more to do," MC Adeem proclaims as their manifesto unfolds over old-schoolish breaks (think Run-DMC's "Here We Go"), courtesy of producer Maker, while DJDQ mans the turntables. Glue's sound explodes out of the speakers with excessive amounts of energy (raising expectations for their live show) and, for all its retro style, bristles with original lyrical statements. This is no mere angsty backpacker album, but an indication that the battle between hip-hop and rap is far from over. *Eric K. Arnold*

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- Sat, Nov. 4 - Starlite, **Philadelphia PA**
- Sun, Nov. 5 - Sonar, **Baltimore MD**



[adult swim]





**N.PHECT & DIZPLAY  
BEAUTIFUL BYTES**

Basswerk/GER/CD

Cologne-based brothers Sebastian and Henrik Wild have been a production duo since 2002, promoting the D&B splinter sect of "neurofunk." The resulting sonic assault on the brain is not for everyone, but everyone should give the duo's debut a listen. N.Phect & Dizplay dominate the dancefloor here, presenting both crunching collabos (with DJ Phace, The Green Man, and Starke & Gorterer) and solo sessions. N.Phect goes ambient-orchestral while Dizplay dabbles in pop vox. Check out "My Velvet Morning," "Motor," and "Don't You See" first. *Stacy Meyn*



**OWUSU & HANNIBAL  
LIVING WITH OWUSU & HANNIBAL**

Ubiquity/US/CD

It's astounding that this Copenhagen duo managed to birth one of the most sublime excursions into Euro-chic synth-soul after meeting less than a year ago. Tossing interstellar beats into a basket with fruits plucked from the gardens of Maxwell, Jamiroquai, 4 Hero, and Jazzanova, *Living* is a virtual cornucopia of soundscapes that flaunts complex, interwoven vocal harmonics ("Blue Jay"), early-'80s Prince fodder ("Upstairs Downstairs"), and blissful new wave chord progressions ("Le Fox"). Owusu & Hannibal's electronic orgy of mellow moods grooves with a synergy that implies years of chomping at the bit. *Rico* "Superbizzee" *Washington*



**PANACEA  
INK IS MY DRINK**

Glow-in-the-Dark-Rawkus/US/CD

Only half a year after dropping the rock-solid EP *Thinking Back Looking Forward*,

Washington, DC duo Panacea is back with a full-length good enough to place them among the best hip-hop newcomers this year. This compact, 12-track effort from producer K-Murdock and MC Raw Poetic is free of filler and heavy on thoughtfully penned raps and lush, sample-driven beats. It really doesn't matter if they're laying down smoothed-out songs about lost love or bubbly, jazz-fueled, true-school joints—Panacea is crafting the kind of music that will make most listeners happy about hip-hop in 2006. *Max Herman*

**LEE SCRATCH PERRY  
PANIC IN BABYLON**

Narnack/US/CD

While technology has helped spread reggae music globally, there's always a downside. For Scratch, the man who invented dub by cutting magnetic tapes in his makeshift Black Ark studio, all this Pro Tooling hinders the warmth and immediacy once synonymous with his name. Admittedly, *Panic in Babylon* is one of his better efforts in recent decades, but he's caught between two worlds: recreating the past he invented and battling the bad boys of dancehall today. Right now he's stuck between two hard places with no light in sight. *Derek Beres*

**PINBACK  
NAUTICAL ANTIQUES**

Ace Fu/US/CD

Who knew machines could make such beautiful music? Even Pinback's rarities and b-sides, including the ones made between 1998 and 2001, collected here, have a crystalline grace to them. The fact that they were all created in garages and bedrooms is a finer validation of the internet age than anything else. Laptop-pop nuggets abound here, from the airy harmonies (and sampled kettle whistle) of "Anti-Hu" to Zach Smith's and Rob Crow's dexterous finger work on the online-only "Messenger." Like watching spider webs glitter in a synthetic sun. *Scott Thill*

**PLANET ASIA  
THE MEDICINE**

ABB/US/CD

Given Planet Asia's and Evidence's past chemistry ("Place of Birth"), their new collaborative effort *The Medicine* looked to be a sure shot. Though it didn't turn out to be a magnum opus for either artist, it's not a bad effort either. While Evidence's grimy, slow, rolling beats are a little too close to The Alchemist's gangsta backdrops, they do suit Asia, the self-dubbed "hardest independent artist," nicely. What's most impressive about this album is that Asia actually does seem to be closing in on fulfilling his goal of making underground music that can bump in the club. *Max Herman*

**PRESTO  
MAGIC**

Concrete Grooves/US/CD

Those born after '85 may not remember Presto Magix, but there couldn't be a more appropriate metaphor for Culver City producer Presto's new LP. Like those bygone rub-on transfer kits, Presto's tracks can be applied to myriad environments, fitting just as crisply on a hip-hop mixtape as they would at the winding down of an extended after-hours party. Known for his patient, jazz-tinged solo instrumentals, Presto recruits a solid squad of guests (Lowd, J Medeiros, and Raashan Ahmad among them), to bridge the old school with the new. *Steve Marchese*

**RANKIN TOYAN  
GHETTO MAN SKANK**

Roots/UK/CD

Produced in 1983 by Jah Thomas for his Midnight Rock label, *Ghetto Man Skank* presents deejay Rankin Toyan at his prime. Chatting on classic Roots Radics rhythms, Toyan was blessing the dancehall regularly alongside Yellowman, Fathead, Louie Lepkie, and Johnny Ringo. Toyan's liquid patois on "Gwan Go Dance" and "Nice It Up" exudes the good vibes of a true rub-a-dub session. His toasting is so effortless that you get the impression that he could literally deejay for hours. Two duets with Jah Thomas, including "Two Bad DJs" on the old-school Entertainment riddim, round out this masterful set. *Tomas Palermo*

**SQUAREPUSHER  
HELLO EVERYTHING**

Warp/UK/CD

Tom Jenkinson (a.k.a. Squarepusher) has rewarded the listening public with a plastic gift every year since '96. That's a 10-year, 10-album journey, stopping off in territories as varied as anxious breaks, fruity future-funk, jazz fusion, and schizoid D&B.



**VARIOUS  
THE WORLD IS GONE**

XL/UK/CD

London's Various (frontrunner for most pretentious band name of 2006) matches mysterious spook-folk and dungeon electronics with an ominous secrecy. Much like The Knife—whose *Silent Shout* enjoyed a second round of popularity thanks to America's transfixion on the duo's furtive, face-painted shtick—Various is hush-hush when it comes to identity, image, or anything that might pull the curtain away and reveal the hidden puppeteers and make them somewhat Googleable. But smoke and mirrors work wonders—the ghostly tracks here wouldn't pack nearly the same punch without the mystery. Like a British Lansing-Dreiden (only less art-school shithead and a lot more cave-dwelling madman), Various deals mostly in grimy beats and mossy, castle-ready meditations. It's far from groundbreaking, but taken as a whole, the band seems poised to emerge as one of today's more interesting acts. *Robbie Mackey*

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But everything seemed to culminate on 2004's masterwork, *Ultravisitor*, a meaty, studied album that pulled from every influence at Jenkinson's disposal. So while *Hello Everything* boasts all of the stair-stepping synth, busy bass, and jazz structuring we've come to expect from Squarepusher, it seems a bit stuck in the shadow of a more complete record, and an increasingly imposing back catalog. *Robbie Mackey*

**TANYA STEPHENS**  
**REBELLION**  
VP/US/CD

Tanya Stephens has always been a "singles" artist, producing a few killer tracks on top of albums filled with decent, though not outstanding, material. *Rebellion* proves no different. (Respect paid firstly to one of reggae's most diverse female vocalists, able to navigate seriously studious dancehall and acoustic roots equally.) With her sixth release, she keeps it more relaxed, though the rolling cymbal hits of "Who is Tanya" and upbeat swagger of "Spilled Milk" add plenty of juice to her rebellion. Intermittent monologues on spirituality and community are insightful but tend to weigh down the flow—choppy, but it still merits attention. *Derek Beres*



**STEREOTYP**  
**KEEPIN' ME**  
G-Stoned/US/CD

The opening electro-gospel title track (with Sandra Kurzweil's painfully soulful vocals) alone makes this album worthwhile. Stefan Moerth, a reclusive producer who blends beats in a Vienna wine cellar, has mastered the art of bass. Since 2002's *My Sound*, the man has continually created sensuous, low-end-heavy club bangers and midtempo tracks. Influenced heavily by the Rasta vibe, his broken-beat cuts focus on guest vocals and a cornucopia of sound effects. Ranging from



erie to scary to—interestingly enough—comforting, *Keepin' Me* is proof positive of Stereotyp's brilliant alchemy. *Derek Beres*

**SYBARITE**  
**CUT OUT SHAPE**  
Temporary Residence/US/CD

Four years after his triumphant *Nonument* for 4AD, Xian Hawkins returns to Temporary Residence to take his home-field advantage. Worth every bit of the wait, *Cut Out Shape* sees an extensive diversification of Hawkins' array of rampantly unique sounds. Teaming up with Psapp, "Runaway" sees Sybarite showing up Stereolab while "Halfmoon Rockstruck" achieves more emotive heft in two minutes than most bands chase for an eternity. This is the *Shape* of things to come for Sybarite. *Brian Paul*

**VERT**  
**SOME BEANS & AN OCTOPUS**  
Sonig/GER/CD

This CD should be programmed to only play between 2 and 4 a.m. on weekend nights. That's when listeners are likely to still be awake from an evening of swilling booze—and can laugh at anything. Adam Butler sharply departs from post-techno and indulges in mutant ragtime. And he won't shut up. Our man jabbars away in an annoyingly dry and detached tone. He delivers some dandy piano jaunts and pots 'n' pans rhythms on "Paper Wraps Stone" and "...Said the Signal to the Noise," but his poetry slams interrupt the momentum. *Cameron Macdonald*

**THE WHITEST BOY ALIVE**  
**DREAMS**  
Bubbles/UK/CD

Imagine sensitive indie rock reduced to steady drum pulses and lonely guitar chords, and you have the beginnings of The Whitest Boy Alive. Frontman Erlend Øye (Kings of Convenience) doesn't waste a breath, casually muttering pained declarations—like "Patience is just another word for getting old"—as if the only audience he's playing to is the man in the mirror. This is a masterful example of the kind of moving but pensive music that accompanies breakups in teen movies. If that isn't a dig in your book, pick up this album. *Patrick Sisson*

**SPANKY WILSON & THE QUANTIC SOUL ORCHESTRA**  
**I'M THANKFUL**  
Ubiquity/US/CD

Quantic Soul Orchestra's annexation of senior jazz-soul singer Spanky Wilson for "Don't Joke with a Hungry Man" was pure new-funk genius. QSO's crisp snares and tight, mellow horn harmonies work perfectly behind Wilson. That the two should combine for a brilliant album is obvious, but *I'm Thankful* falls short of the mark. Besides two takes each on "Don't Joke," many of its 10 tracks are either half-hearted in their writing or tread too-familiar territory. "I'm Thankful" and a few others push Wilson towards her potential, but too often, the songs barely have enough meat on their bones for Spanky to eat. *Justin Hopper*

**XIU XIU**  
**THE AIR FORCE**  
5RC/US/CD

Xiu Xiu specializes in a ratty brand of noise pop that relies on the most extreme feelings for impact—a kind of bipolar pathos music. As such, Jamie Stewart's catalog tends to ricochet between opposite ends of a diseased spectrum. On *The Air Force*, the group loads a half hour with unchecked fits and medicated slogs that recalibrate with a remarkable fluidity. It's only seconds of pretty piano before off-kilter percussion stabs and jagged sub-bass lead everything into a train wreck of atonal harmonies and unsettling silence. Naturally, such a depressive and exhaustive M.O. demands a lot, but the unpacking is well worth it. *Robbie Mackey*

**ZERO DB**  
**BONGOS, BLEEPS & BASSLINES**  
Ninja Tune/UK/CD

*Bongos, Bleeps & Basslines*, Zero dB's long-awaited debut album, is a slamming musical *tour de force*. Misterys Vogado & Combstock stir up a witches' brew of ingredients, an invigorating blend of Latin, jazz, broken ish, and beats du jour, alongside acoustic flourishes and guest vocals. "a pomBa giRou" wastes no time laying down the album's character, while the title track is contagious and ever-so-twisted. Late-night, downtempo sizzler "Sunshine Lazy" ends it all in fine style—bold, brash, and brilliant. *Velanche*



**Zombie Nation**

**ZOMBIE NATION**  
**BLACK TOYS**  
UKW/GER/CD

When the puck goes past a visiting goalie at TD Banknorth Garden in Boston, several thousand Bruins fans go crazy as a busy synth line and pounding bass drum thumps through the soundsystem. No one in attendance really knows the anthemic snippet's origin, but their ignorance doesn't make it any less effective. The Bruins' prized celebration number is called "Kernkraft 400," a track taken from the debut EP by German DJ-turned-fist-pumper Zombie Nation. Nowadays, ZN braintrust John Starlight (a.k.a. Splank) isn't rocking arenas as much as he's shaking tails, like an economy-sized Daft Punk plugged straight into a house party. It couldn't come at a better time, considering the French robo-house juggernaut's recent face plant (last year's *Human After All*). But with tracks like these, filling the void left by Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo and Thomas Bangalter might be easier than typing out their full names. *Robbie Mackey*



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FROM THATCHERIAN REVOLT TO HOT TOPIC: GOTH'S UNDYING PRESENCE ON THE POP LANDSCAPE.

A LIFE LESS LIVED: THE GOTHIC BOX  
Rhino/US/CD

It's 1984, and George Orwell's corpse rolls with laughter as Ronald Reagan declares, "I am pleased to tell you... the bombing begins in five minutes." Margaret Thatcher has enjoyed a second election win, due in part to her propensity to demonize: Russia, the working class, and society itself. The resounding, blackout reverb of Bauhaus' "She's in Parties" rings throughout the United Kingdom, pausing mid-dub with Peter Murphy's deadpan ironic declaration: "Happy days are here again..."

It's not hard to see from whence came that most maligned-yet-immortal of underground musical movements: goth. A pervasive sense of fear and anomie across America, Europe, and especially Britain had the early 1980s brimming with a darkened musical creativity (mirroring medieval artists' preoccupation with death and darkness during the time of the plague). In the early '80s, nuclear plague loomed in the background—with young Britons and Yanks aware that they might reap the everlasting rewards of their fathers' cold wars. In 2006, with goth's black uniforms in every mall and the imperious sounds of Marilyn Manson and death-rock bands ringing out from suburban basements, we have Columbine, the crumbling Twin Towers, and the ubiquitous "elevated threat level" to thank for reawakening the dark beast.

Thus Rhino presents *A Life Less Lived: The Gothic Box*, a three-CD-plus-DVD collection of the must-haves from goth's quarter-century-plus. Beginning with Joy Division's seminal "Dead Souls" and ending with current goth-punk superstars AFI covering The Cure, *A Life Less Lived* exists to document the post-punk gothic era and its descendents, and little else. It arrives bountiful with forgotten treats, like the guttural baritone of Sisters of Mercy's Andrew Eldritch, or the cartoonish mythology of Fields of the Nephilim—bands whose shimmering black sounds seem so obvious now, yet resound with purity and originality. But *The Gothic Box* also comes with tricks—bands whose inclusion might have as much to do with a hairstyle as a dark-baroque sensibility.

Part of goth's *raison d'être* was a Thatcherite focus on individuality; many

of the initially goth-tagged artists didn't want to be a part of any scene that would have them. When asked to pen a review of 1982's year in goth, The Birthday Party singer Nick Cave damned the whole thing, citing the "scene" as the reason his band had "mutinied" to Berlin. "HMS Britain was a good ship," he states. "We just got sick of doing all the rowing." *A Life Less Lived* addresses such rejections with an eye towards rescuing the G-word from its purgatory, but in doing so perhaps heightens the situation: If Siouxsie or Bauhaus is gothic, one might want to join that number; Flesh for Lulu or Specimen, less so.

As with any multi-disc compilation, there are some odd distillation choices. Some decidedly gothic contemporaneous groups (All About Eve, Shirley Manson's Goodbye Mr. MacKenzie, And Also The Trees) are absent. The concentration on the original '80s scene also means America's recent contributions to the genre, such as the Projekt and Bedazzled labels, get a miss.

As an overview of the foundations of a musical scene that has blossomed into one of the most wide-reaching and long-surviving underground movements in worldwide pop culture, *A Life Less Lived* hits the mark. Whether it's the Virgin Prunes-ish electro-rock of DFA Records, the debt worldwide death-rockers owe to Christian Death, or the cues that dance music derives from Danse Society and Skinny Puppy, *A Life Less Lived* contains plenty of revelations. *Justin Hopper*





**DJ KRUSH**  
**STEPPING STONES: THE SELF-REMIXED BEST**

Sony/US/CD  
 The most recognizable name in Japanese turntablism is back, this time bearing not strange, new fruit but skewed, recombinant soundscapes from a storied career almost two decades deep. And though a remix comp does not a new experiment make, you can cut Krush some slack: Between mixtapes, remixes, and originals, his stream of productions outdistances that of similarly revered turntablists. The structures of atmospheric classics like "Duality," "Bypath," and "Kemuri" remain mostly untouched, save for splashes of noise, digital and otherwise. Krush's intervention is more noticeable on Disc Two, where amped updates of "Only the Strong Survive," "Meiso," and "Vision of Art" seriously deviate from the stripped-down sound of their precedents. Some might wish that he threw the fuller flourishes of *Stepping Stones* onto a new record, but the rest should find this revisionist history a worthwhile introduction to one of the legends of the game. *Scott Thill*



**BIP-HOP GENERATION: VOL. 8**  
 Bip-Hop/FRA/CD

Eight volumes into its *Generation* series and Bip-Hop still manages to find international artists mining the glitch. Most perform fine excursions in ambient drones, fractal-funk rhythms, and post-Fennesz guitar treatments. TU M's "Under the Sea" brilliantly illustrates a rising sun, heard in their shimmering guitar echoes and distant trumpet calls. Murcof's "Constelacion" delivers a better planetarium-show soundtrack than the usual Pink Floyd schlock, while Tennis' "Open Sesame" is a gospel hymn sung by a robot. Keep the faith, Bip-Hop. *Cameron Macdonald*



**THE DFA REMIXES: CHAPTER 2**  
 DFA/US/CD

The rise of James Murphy and Tim Goldsworthy—the production team known as The DFA—didn't happen overnight. Rather, it moved in increments, one hipster dance party and disco edit at a time. Earlier this year, the duo laid 'em bare, cobbling together the first chapter in their *DFA Remixes* series—a confident, career-spanning collection of reinventions that saw Le Tigre, Chemical Brothers, and Gorillaz fly through their '80s-loving ringer. The recent *Chapter 2* is more of the same, except here they stretch their psych-dance magic over 12-minute stretches of Goldfrapp's "Slide In" and N.E.R.D.'s "She Wants to Move." *Robbie Mackey*

**DIAMANTEN UND RAKETEN**

Klang Elektronik/GER/CD  
 This compilation of bristly beats and constricting suspense translates as "Diamonds and Rockets," which might imply that these (mostly) previously released "post-techno" Teutonic jack trax are gleaming, unblemished bangers. And yet the most compelling moments are the tracks' meticulous flaws. The pockmarked partitions of Phage & Daniel Dreier's "Bees Wax," the braided and abraded blurts of Johannes Heil's "Freaks R Us," the stalking burbles of Raudive's "Turn It Off"—these are the style's memorable facets. Avus, 2 Dollar Egg, Alter Ego, and more also deliver pneumatic deep tech and condensed tension. How 'bout *Diamond-Etched Grooves and Ruckus?* *Tony Ware*

**FABRICLIVE 29: CUT COPY**

Fabric/UK/CD  
 The DJ-mix CD is tough to pull off. In an effort to capture marathon club sets within 75 destined-for-home-stereo minutes, many of today's best mixmasters get stuck, uninspired, in no man's land. Not so Australian rockers Cut Copy. With ears for melody, finely tuned to the dancefloor, the trio purveys an infectious party vibe while deftly genre-skipping behind the decks: sun-kissed keys cascade into punky reverb and steely guitar rock power-slides into filtered French house. But despite boasting an array of styles, *FabricLive 29* never feels campy, forced, or anything else short of just plain fun. *James Jung*

**FOUR TET: REMIXES**

Domino/UK/CD  
 Aside from flexing the automated muscle of one Kieran Hebden, *Remixes* is an absolutely monstrous collection of songs—a 24-track compendium of Four Tet-related remixes laid out over two discs; one for Hebden's own work, and another for artists giving FT songs the once-over. In truth, it's a novel setup that inadvertently pits the owl-eyed Brit against his collaborators and their tracks. When his source material isn't outshining lesser remixes on Disc Two, Hebden is bettering tunes by Bloc Party and Radiohead on Disc One. When it's all over, there's only one winner: Four Tet himself. *Robbie Mackey*

**KAOS & SAL P: COLLECTORS SERIES PT.2—DANSE, GRAVITÉ ZÉRO**  
 Faith/GER/CD

Just when the unending tide of DJ-mixed albums was really starting to get you down, a Berlin DJ/producer and a Liquid Liquid legend team up to bring you this masterpiece. Aiming to emulate the eclectic, rhythmically avant-garde mixes of late-'70s cosmic disco, they match the genre's inventiveness with a perfectly realized mix, one that even features a dubbed-up intro by Sal P. With 25 tracks—mostly obscure mind-blowing ones—Kaos and Sal P have upped the ante, big time. *Brian Paul*

**KEEP THE FAITH**

Dust Science/UK/CD  
 Faith-based techno? You'll be ready to pledge your vote to the Dust Science slate after hearing *Keep the Faith*, the label's first compilation of thick, brainy-yet-danceable techno from the legendary likes of Dan Curtain and Richard H. Kirk. The basslines throb, the acid boxes pulse, the voices are buried and distorted in the mix in a wave of bottomless beats that feels more like a relentless Plastikman mix than a grab-bag label comp. Newcomer Derailleur steals the show with "Repeat Offender," a savage beating of a track structured like a classical symphony. *Rob Geary*

**MAGDA: SHE'S A DANCING MACHINE**

Minus/CAN/CD  
 Nobody has ever accused Minus of not giving us our money's worth, and that continues to be the case with the newest hyper-mixed project from the label's second-hardest-working DJ. Seventy-one tracks in 78 minutes? It can be done. Well, it's kinda been done already, but that's beside the point. Surgical selections from the works of Marc Houle, Plastikman, Louderbach, and Magda herself (to name a fraction) are integrated in a snappy, linear flow that, by its very constitution, cannot help but be enticingly dynamic. Oodles of subliminal treats to be re-discovered with each listen. *Doug Morton*

**MO'HORIZONS: STEREO 150**

Stereo Deluxe/GER/CD  
 Jumping from *Volume 2* to *150* (to celebrate their sizable discography), Stereo Deluxe commissioned Ralf Droesemeyer and Foh Wetzler to survey and mix away their back catalog. Though they claim their muscle is global, the truth is that their bins reflect a hard Euro bent with traces of international influence. This comes

alive in Boozoo Bajou's classic "Under My Sensei" and Quantic's flute-charged mix of Trio Eléctrico's "Echo Parcours." *Mo'Horizons* takes honors not just for a smooth, flowing charge of bass-heavy background cuts, but for stepping up front with the collection's top cut: a Latin remix of the stellar "Drum'n Boogaloo." *Derek Beres*

**MORROW CHORAL ORCHESTRA**

Designed Disorder/US/CD  
 Android drums bounce, flutter, and dissipate; fragmented clicks swirl and somber synths echo in galactic expanses. These are the sounds proffered by Deru, Machinedrum, Edit, Richard Devine, and eight other key IDM and ambient electronic artists on independent L.A. label Designed Disorder's new collection. What's surprising is how each contributor weaves freely in and out of genres like hip-hop, techno, dub, and *musique concrète* while expanding their boundaries. If you thought you knew exactly what Mr. Projectile, Anon, Ben Milstein, or Eight Frozen Molecules were musically capable of, guess again. Score another victory for the independent electronic underground. *Tomas Palermo*

**MOVEMENTS 2: 15 DEEP FUNK PEARLS**

Perfect Toy/GER/CD  
 In the flood of funk and soul reissue compilations of late, *Movements 2* stands out because of its seemingly complete lack of focus. Rather than concentrate on a region, label, producer, city or sound, Tobias Kirmayer's second volume of funk is simply Kirmayer's picks. It contains neither the most obscure nor the most historically vital funk 45s, and will likely leave some hardcore collectors smirking at previously reissued tracks like Funky Nassau's "Bahama Soul Stew" and Carlton Basco's "Don't Chain My Soul." But the more casual funk fan will find *Movements 2* refreshing for the same reasons: Every track is finger-burning hot. *Justin Hopper*

**OSUNLADE: CINCO ANOS DESPUE**

Yoruba-Soul Jazz/UK/2CD  
 Fittingly, this two-CD set, comprised of 20 tracks culled from Osunlade's Yoruba Records catalog, opens with "Ochun's Arrival," an invocation to the Orisha representing the spiritual side of the essence of womanhood. The sexy, flirty track bounces along over an uptempo, flute-infused beat. This is deep house, alright, but deep in the sense that it seeks to connect Afro-Cuban religious tradition with extra-sensual electronic music—cheesy disco divas and stock 4/4 beats need not apply. Other Orishas are invoked, along with seductive Latin grooves and funky percussion-fueled sweat fests, resulting in rapturous dancefloor bliss that might just heal your mind, body, and soul. *Eric K. Arnold*

**PEANUT BUTTER WOLF: CHROME MIX**

Stones Throw/US/CD  
 Can Stones Throw do no wrong? Their latest release, *Chrome Mix*, features choice tracks from an upcoming joint venture with Adult Swim entitled *Chrome Children*. Showcasing Oh No, Jaylib, Aloe Blacc, Quasimoto, and more, PB Wolf perfectly patches charming snippets into a concise, 25-minute blend. Standouts include a melodic remix of Madvillain's "Meat Grinder" along with multi-syllabic madness from Percee P on "Rapper's Flee." Although the mix isn't without lulls—notably Georgia Anne Muldrow and Roc C's dull cuts—*Chrome Mix* is thoughtfully assorted, well paced and, simply put, a very colorful listen. Recommended. *David Ma*

**RIO BAILE FUNK: MORE FAVELA BOOTY BEATS**

Essay/GER/CD  
*Baile* funk's gritty ghetto beats and repetitive *fútbol* chants are almost futuristic in their stripped primitivism, and perfect fodder for a worldwide club audience begging for something less subtle, less commercialized, more punch-to-the-face direct in its delivery. Tracks like Voltair's grimy "Cleck Cleck Boom" and the glitchy Bonde do Role mix of Edu K's "Hot Mama" show *baile* to be expanding its horizons under the world's spotlight, while retaining that down-low directness, making *More Favela Booty Beats* not just "more" but "must-have" for the *favela* funk enthusiast. *Justin Hopper*

**SERIOUS TIMES**

XL/US/CD  
 Many reggae compilations are hastily created in a race to be "up to di time," often producing lackluster results. Not so with this collection of the most beautiful and moving one-drop tunes, reaching all the way back to 2003 for Tony Curtis' oft-overlooked "Rolling." Most of these songs are well known to fans of the genre, but this two-CD set offers bonuses like a disc expertly mixed by Max Glazer (Federation Sound) and a gorgeous remix of Gyptian's "Serious Times," the crucial song that hit at the same time as the two biggest hurricanes in recent history. *Ross Hogg*

**SLIP 'N' SLIDE PRESENTS IBIZA VOL. 3**  
**SLIP 'N' SLIDE PRESENTS THE 12" SINGLES**  
**COLLECTION VOL. 1**

Slip 'N' Slide/UK/CD  
 Notting Hill's Slip 'N' Slide is one of house music's most durable labels, holding its own since 1991. *Ibiza Vol. 3* showcases Christian Larsson's strength for picking bumping tunes—from the tech-heavy "Lose Control" by Darkmountaingroup to the jump-up funk Jaime Lewis infuses on Chuck Love's "Spread The Love." *The 12" Singles* should appeal to soulful house fans, with a few Latin goodies like Simon Grey's mix of Blak Beat Niks' "The Sun Will Shine." But overall, *The 12" Singles* lacks the freshness of the *Ibiza* picks. Durable perhaps, but novel surprises would also be welcome. *Velanche*



**OTTO VON SCHIRACH: ARMPIT BUFFET**

Schetroit Undermatic/US/CD  
 It's doubtful there's a genre more solipsistic and incestuous than IDM. At least this CD acknowledges it's a "tribute" to Miami tone masticator Otto Von Schirach. And by "tribute" they mean an agitated compilation rinsed in his chunky regurgitant detergent. Contributors include Phoenecia, Venetian Snares, Hearts of Darkness, Soft Pink Truth, Quintron, Doormouse, Richard Devine, Jamie Lidell, Dino Felipe, and Secret Chiefs 3. Frequencies fist blurring sphincter fissures, ear-canal ejaculate, and then groan from their distended anarchitecture, with these breakcore, electro, 8-bit, and "file under Other" interpretations making mince meat from tossed salad. *Tony Ware*



**Hall of Justus**

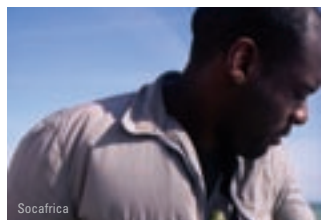
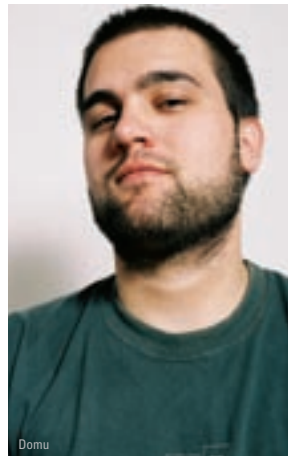
**SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE**

Hall of Justus-ABB/US/CD  
 Out of all the talent in the Justus League, it's their inaugural act, Little Brother, who has by far received the most props and opportunities to be heard. But with *Soldiers of Fortune*, the League's in-house record label (Hall of Justus) fittingly provides a platform for lesser-known members like Skyyzo and Jozee Mo. On the standout track "Secret," the unsigned bravado specialist Joe Scudda addresses how it feels to be so slept on; atop a blaxploitation soundtrack groove, he raps, "I swear to God/If my swagger was money/I'd be worth like three or four mil." Sure, Phonte, Big Pooh, and 9th Wonder of Little Brother are responsible for some of the better back-to-basics hip-hop on this compilation, but under-the-radar MCs like Scudda prove to be just as vital to the future of the League. *Max Herman*





**Broken Business**  
By Peter Nicholson  
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



My mailman's gotta hate me. Sure, dude smiles to my face and jokes about always bringing me more "work" while managing to lose all my checks, but he must be tired of trying to stuff CD mailers into my standard-issue mailbox. Just yesterday, I went out to get my day's loot and there was so much stuff, he'd used a rubber band to strap one package to the outside of the box! Luckily my neighborhood miscreants didn't swipe it, because it was a surprise package from my secret purveyor of dopeness, Agent JJ.

First up on the 78-song (seventy-eight!!) MP3 CD-R tucked inside the package was a spanking new slice of hotness from **Domu**. "Tell Me Something" pairs mellow, watery pads with Sheffield's **Pete Simpson**, who has a voice that's pure soul gold. Of course there's also a "Dark Dub," which turns up the wrinkly bass and french-fried snare drums. Feverishly clicking my mouse, I moved right on to the sprightly squelch of **Sonar Circle's** "Cabana," featuring muted vocal loops, a bruising bassline, and a slight disco feel to its handclaps. (Word on the street is that both tracks are available via [www.trebleo.co.uk](http://www.trebleo.co.uk).)

This CD-R was so hot, I thought my janky four-year-old Mac was going to melt, so I rushed to blast out the latest **Aklimatize** cut, "Dime La Verdad," featuring **Totin Agosto**. Puerto Rico via Vancouver, wha?! Rolling timbales, super-fresh broken snares, and wah-wah keys—oh, yes! Only thing that could top that would be a new **Opolopo** joint. I first got hip to the O via his truly crazy broken soul remix of Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean," but the man is truly on some next-level action with the rough, scratchy slabs of synths that drive his remix for **Bugz In The Attic's** "Move Aside."

Now, check out what was in the other manila envelopes my mailman doesn't keep for himself. How about the return of **Jimi Tenor** with the *Sunrise* album sampler on Finland's Sähkö Recordings? "Hermetic Man" is my choice, with ascending, interlocking melodies, rich horns and flute, and a thoroughly optimistic vibe.

At the complete other end of the spectrum is "Take Off Ya Top," the first wax from Love House Records by **Socafrica** featuring **Starta John** of Basement Jaxx fame. I'm all about the Latin Mix which has some spicy brass, fiery tropical piano (Word to the wise—after the recent trance revival, next up is piano house. Remember Black Box?), and the absurd enjoiner to "Wave yer brassiere/In the aaa-ir!"

I love me some Freerange Records, but most of the time I've got to let my esteemed colleagues covering house and techno give them ink. However **Mowgly's** *Solar System* EP gives me the chance to give them a shout-out in my real estate. Once again, Domu rears his shaggy head with a percussion-heavy remix of the title track, but I'm also digging the original with its rimshot-driven syncopation, swirling synths, and mutating strings. Choice stuff from the Frenchman also known as Simbad and Marathon Men.

There's more, of course, but I'm out of page and it sounds like the mail truck is pulling up outside. Every day is Christmas around here, much to the dismay of my poor, overworked postal carrier.



**Fast Forward**  
By Method One  
EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF DRUM & BASS



"Come gather 'round...you're listening to the number one sound"

While I would like to think that this particular statement applies to all drum & bass (after all, why else would I be writing this column?), I have to give credit where credit is due, and preview a track that is sure to be caned mercilessly in the coming months—"Number 1 Sound" (TEKDBZ) by **Photek**, featuring the talents of **DJ Craze** and the **MC MC**. To say that this tune is a massive anthem is an understatement, and it's not the only new bit to come out of the Photek/TEKDBZ camp. **Tech Freaks** have also added their dark and destructive flavor to **Special Forces'** crowd favorite "Baltimore" (Photek), with "Man Down" by Photek, **Teebee**, and **Tech Itch** adding flavor to the flipside.

While I'm discussing sounds hard and heavy, I would be remiss not to mention *Break the System* (Project 51), the long-awaited solo album from San Francisco's own **Gridlok**. Coming on the heels of last year's *Welcome to Violence* album and too many singles and remixes to count, it's no surprise that the tracks on *Break the System* take no prisoners. From the sheer intensity of "Hollywood" (featuring **El Hornet of Pendulum**) to the paranoid, eye-in-the-sky commentary of "Watching Us" (with Los Angeles' **MC Dino**), Gridlok has created a collection of tracks that sweats the details and destroys the dancefloor.

The next few months will be busy ones for the Cymbalism Recordings crew, with several new releases in the pipeline. **The Chosen's** "Nightmare" alongside **Shakka & Diamond's** "Word of God" should be hitting shops as you read this, followed closely by **Unknown Error's** "No Escape" with **Subsonik's** "Communicate." All should satisfy those looking for a big tune to get the crowd moving, but with surprising depth

and attention to the little things. I especially like the trancey amen stomp of "Communicate" and the eerie soundscapes (and *Pi* samples) of "Word of God." And if that weren't enough, Cymbalism's sister label—Cymbalism Limited—is set to release the latest from **Infiltrata & Demo**, entitled "Can't Reach." Flip it over for the apocalyptic "Hatred Among Us" by **Mumblz & Fixation**, a nod to the classic rave tune "O Fortuna."

I don't want to leave out any of the smoother styles that have found their way into my inbox as of late. Germany's **Amaning** hits the ground running with the first two releases from his label, BIOS (which stands for "Breakbeat Input/Output System," in case you were wondering). The first release, "Neverlove," comes from up-and-coming stars **Stunna and Contour** with **Drumagick's** "Goran" 12" finishing things off. Both will easily satisfy fans of melodic, liquid sounds, but I especially like the uplifting vibes and tough bassline of "Neverlove," and the pure musicianship that shines through gives me yet another opportunity to joke about Stunna being the Stevie Winwood of drum & bass. Back in the high life again? Indeed. BIOS #2 showcases the talents of **Motion** with the Middle Eastern-themed "Elements of Truth" and the sublime early-morning tune "The Sun at 5am," which features the vocals of **Hannah C.** Very nice.

Finally, I have really been feeling the *Shogun Assassins* EPs from the ever-solid Shogun Recordings. Between the two double-packs, there are more than a few amazing tunes from the likes of **Commix, K-Tee, D-Bridge, Teebee, Breakage & SP:MC, DJ Friction**, and **Noisia** (as remixed by **Break**). Be sure to hunt both down at your local shops.

**Bonobo**  
Days To Come

Bonobo's third full length, *Days To Come* is being heralded as his most accomplished recording to date. Features guest vocal performances from Bajka (Ubbity, Compost & Jazzman) and Fink.

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<b>THUNDERBALL</b> CINESCOPE	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> ADULT SWIM PRESENTS CHROME CHILDREN
<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> DFA REMIXES CHAPTER 2	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> ESL REMIXED: THE 100TH RELEASE OF ESL MUSIC







**Reggae Rewind**  
**By Ross Hogg**  
 THE HEARSAY AND DOWNLOW ON  
 DANCEHALL, DUB, ROOTS, AND LOVERS ROCK



Noel Ellis (Photo courtesy of...)



Rob Symeonn (Photo by Diana Blaine)

DJ Liquid's new 12 Gauge riddim (H2O Productions) serves as the backdrop for the renewed war between **Bounty Killer** and **Beenie** (this round of the rift quite likely involves **Angel**, Bounty's ex-girlfriend and Beenie's new bride). The two come out swinging on the rapid-fire riddim (somewhat reminiscent of **Red Bull & Guinness**), but the show is all but stolen by newcomer **Mavado**, the young sing-jay from Bounty's Alliance clique, whose melodic "gangsta for life" and "anyway" catchphrases are set to take over dancehall.

Mavado also busts big with "Dem Nuh Real McCoy" on the Anger Management riddim (DaSeca). This one's a bit of an anomaly, as it originally dropped in 2004 and is only now gaining steam. The uptempo, driving version also features big tunes from Bounty and Beenie, as well as **Alaine** and a pair from **Vybz Kartel**.

Vybz teams up with Mavado on "How You Gun Rise" over the new Ghetto Whiskey riddim. It's the latest offering from DJ-turned-producer **Delly Ranx**, who voices two tracks: "Shotta Fi Life" and the title track alongside **Chino**. It also boasts tracks from veterans **Mega Banton** and **Roundhead**, as well as an interpolation of Shannon's "Let the Music Play" on "All Day," **Craig Dennis**'s warning to informers.

**Capleton** lives up to his "prophet" nickname on **Donovan Bennett**'s Foundation Riddim (Don Corleon). His song "Hits Pon Toppa Hits" shot to the top of the charts and has lent its momentum to other tunes on the riddim, namely Alaine's "Come For Me" and Assassin's "Mouth Mek Fi Chat." Capleton also voices "Watch Watch" on the Cashly riddim (on the oddly misspelled Cashley label), which has standout tracks from **Natural Black** and **Buju Banton**.

On the one-drop side of tings, a label out of Sonoma County, CA is making noise on an international level. The guitar-and-organ-driven Mad Notes riddim on the new Royal Inity label is produced by **Revolution Sound USA** with members of the band **Groundation**, and supports an impressive lineup: Jamaicans **Luciano**, **Lutan Fyah**, and **Jah Mason**, as well as St. Croix's **Ras Attitude**, **Binghi Ghost** and **Donnie Dread**, Germany's **Gentleman**, and a slew of other outernational vocalists. Vinyl-addicted selectors will love the high quality of the 45 pressings.

On the reissue front, Wackie's has reissued *Great Jah Jah* by **Jezzeel**, **Clive Davis**'s and **Christopher Harvey**'s classic 1980 EP. Backed by **Jah Scotty** and his **New Breed Band**, and arranged by the legendary **Lloyd Barnes**, the album consists of six tracks presented showcase style, with stellar dubs following the sweet, harmonious vocal versions.

Light in the Attic Records recently reissued the self-titled 1979 debut album from **Noel Ellis**, son of reggae legend **Alton Ellis**. Originally released on Toronto's Summer Records, the six-song disc features reggae superstars Willie Wilson, Johnny Osbourne, and Jackie Mittoo. Next up: Mittoo's *Wishbone* reissue.

And finally, Redbud recording artist **Rob Symeonn** is back with his long-awaited full-length *The Chosen One*. Most of the production duties are deftly handled by **Noel Alphonso** and **Mikey Assassin**, and appearances from **Willow Wilson**, **Terry Ganzie**, **Junior Kelly**, and others add to the conscious vibes. But the "Cold Outside" single proves that Symeonn's star shines brightly on its own.



Federation Sound, far left (Photo by John Francis Peters)

**Reggae/Dancehall**  
**Guest Reviews:**  
**Federation Sound**

If XL Recordings' recent release of Federation Sound's *Serious Times* compilation tells us anything, it's that Sean Paul has done a fine job of getting the US mainstream interested in all things Jamaica. Dancehall is lighting up all over the world now, and NYC/Philly-based Federation Sound just might be the Yanks to deliver it to your street corner. DJs Max Glazer, Kenny Meez, Disco D, and Alric & Boyd make up the collective, and have been backing big-name artists like Rihanna and Cham on their world tours as of late. Following their XL release, make sure to check the mix *Roots, Reality and Culture Vol. 6* for another healthy dose of the Kingston sound. For this month's guest reviews spot, we caught Max Glazer somewhere between L.A. and NYC, where he let us in on the best reggae and dancehall chunes. *Derek Grey*

[www.federationsound.com](http://www.federationsound.com), [www.myspace.com/djmaxglazer](http://www.myspace.com/djmaxglazer)

**GYPTIAN**

**IS THERE A PLACE (SEASONS RIDDIM)**

Don Corleon/JAM/7

Already high in the ranks of the most recent conscious artists to emerge from JA, Gyptian continues to deliver. What he started with "Serious Times," he continues in fine form right here on Don Corleon's Seasons riddim. *Max Glazer*

**SEAN PAUL**

**AS TIME GOES ON**

VP-Atlantic/US/12

A bonus track on some international versions of Sean's latest album, *The Trinity*, this tune goes even further down the roots and culture path he began trodding with "Never Gonna Be The Same." This one is straight rub-a-dub niceness in a conscious style and fashion! *Max Glazer*

**CHUCK FENDER**

**GASH DEM & LIGHT DEM (CONFESSIONS RIDDIM)**

Juke B0xx/JAM/7

One of the biggest, boomin'est boom tunes to come from yard this season, the former bad man DJ and current cultural convert blazes the fire high high high, guaranteeing that anyone who doesn't pop off their lighter when this tune plays will surely get a thump in dem face. *Max Glazer*

**JAH CURE**

**WHAT WILL IT TAKE (ISTANBUL RIDDIM)**

Purple Skunk/JAM/7

Still locked up. Still making hits. Jah Cure keeps cranking 'em out from behind the prison walls he sang so eloquently about. Backed by DJ Wayne's Istanbul riddim, Jah Cure lays down another one for the ladies... Rasta style. *Max Glazer*

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# DJ KRUSH

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## Read The Label By Jesse "Drosco" Serwer

HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



Frank N Dank



Matthew Africa  
(Photo by Davey Fine)



Too Short

Life is too short, like the man said, but, damn! **Too Short** just dropped his 16th album. Maybe we still got some time. More enjoyable than the actual album *Blow Your Whistle (Jive)*, is a new mixtape by **Matthew Africa** and **DJ Eleven** entitled *Dirty Raps: The Best of Too Short*. Even if you're as fond of Todd Anthony Shaw as Blowjob Betty, you might not be aware of how many dope songs he really has. A nice touch is *Short Dog* circa 2006 singing along with some of his classic jams from the '80s.

One of the problems with Bay Area hip-hop is that it seems like a lot of the good tracks never get a proper release on vinyl. Fortunately there's the Straight From Da Bay! white label series. The latest installment, *Vol. 7*, brings (relatively) new heat from **Federation**, **The Team**, and **Babyface Assassins** along with remixes of Bay standards like Federation's "Hyphy," **Keak Da Sneak**'s "White Tee, Blues Jeans and Nikes," and "Vans" by **The Pack** (featuring **Too Short** and **Mistah F.A.B.**). Gotta feel this Federation joint, "Stunna Glasses At Night," a sick-dumb interpretation of Corey Hart's '80s jam, "Sunglasses At Night." Oversized.

Just in time for the release of their long-awaited debut LP, *XTended Play Version 3.13*, J Dilla's Detroit homies **Frank N Dank** have gathered underground gems from the past seven years, like "Give It Up Pt. 2" and "Push," onto *The Chronicles of Frank N Dank* (mixed by **DJ Tactics**). If Ludacris-style fun hip-hop over underground beats sounds good to you, check their new single "What Up" b/w "The Hustle" (Needillworks/Chisel Sound)... or the album for that matter.

There's nothing progressive about **F.A.B.I.D.**'s "Proper Dosage" b/w "It Iz What It Iz"; it's just straight-up raw. I'd almost say ugly hip-hop. The **DJ Premier**-produced "Proper Dosage" features some really odd singing from **Boy Big** (the thugged-out crooner from Gang Starr's "Nice Girl, Wrong Place"), which is kind of what works about it.

**Oddisee**, a Maryland-based producer/MC from **KeV Brown**'s Low Budget crew, just dropped an overly long debut LP called *Foot In The Door*; fortunately "Once Again" b/w "Such Is Life" and "Propa" (Halftooth) brings some of the better tracks together on one compact single. I'm particularly digging "Such Is Life," which has this great Farfisa organ sound. Not sure if it's sampled or if he plays it, but either way, it sounds dope. The a-side spotlights Brown and **Freddie Foxxx**.

**Custom Made** is the epitome of what a street movement should be. No star rapper with five weaker versions of himself or hired guns; just six or so dope MCs who battled each other in high school, each pulling his own weight (though the one named **Bluff** is particularly nice). Almost like an L.A. version of the Diplomats, they've been saturating the street-album market with an extremely hungry style of lyrical rap, reminiscent of early Mobb Deep or maybe Killarmy. They're no throwback crew, though, and the beats—whoever does 'em—are on point. *Sidewalk Mindtalk: The Best of the Custom Made Mixtapes* (Babygrande), a prelude to their upcoming debut LP, gathers the best of their mixtapes, plus six new ones. Watch out for these dudes.

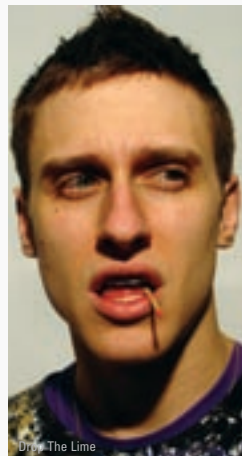


## Basic Needs By Kid Kameleon

LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



The Bug (Photo by Georgina Cook)



Drop the Lime

"Buggin' out, ya buggin' out..." Thanks to the hyphy movement, the world is collectively "getting its grown man on"—one can only hope we'll be seeing UK breakers in ankle-length white tees and grime heads ghost-riding the whip through the streets of Bow. **The Bug** (himself no stranger to stunnas) has put out an open call to hyphy MCs for collab, but until that happens, definitely check the remix of his "Dem a Bomb We" on Soul Jazz, which features **Warrior Queen** getting her hype on over 22nd-century uptempo dancehall. It's done under the name Ladybug and the flip features **Deize Tigrona** on a *Bug baile* funk joint called "Miniatura de Lulu." Hopefully by the end of the year we'll see The Bug's new single on Ninja Tune, "Jah War," featuring **Flowdan** on the mic and a remix by **Loefah**. Sickness!

The Bug's clearly not the only one who's been sipping Hyphy Juice. **Drop the Lime** (a.k.a. L.Vis, a.k.a. Mr. Trouble and Bass) has a three-track smasher coming on **Warlock**'s Rag and Bone label out of London. "Hold On" (b/w "Man Deer Hunted" and "Bad Girls") is 100% dancefloor, hopping mad breaks and synth-screches to drive kiddies wild. He's got some pretty cheeky remixes floating around too as L.Vis (no definite release but keep an ear to the net for that name), and there's also the Trouble and Bass single out from him and **Mathhead** ("Bricks," with "Slamdance" and "Stitches"). By publication, a second one might be ready to go as well. If you're in New York, check T&B's monthly (first Saturdays at Brooklyn's Boogaloo) for guaranteed madness.

Back in the Yay Area, I'm really happy to announce the reconstruction of one of my favorite D&B labels, Argon, into one of my favorite

dubstep/grime labels of the moment. Late this summer Nick Argon released **Matty G**'s "Bitter Love" b/w "For My Smokers," a serious sippin'-on-some-sizzurp take on the sound. Old-school D&B head **Skynet**'s "Swamp" b/w "Isolate" is awesome, too. "Isolate" is one of those rare gems, like Loefah's "I" remix and Distance's "Cyclops": a super-slow, half-time headnodder that works as both head music and a dancefloor motivator. Like DJ Krush doing dubstep (we can only hope...), Argon 09 and 10 are on the way, again involving Matty G and Skynet with a yet-to-be-named remixer. Argon's just one more star in the increasingly bright constellation of American dubstep.

Don't know if this name has appeared in ML Tronik's Bubble Metropolis column or not, but my greatest label find of the summer was actually a Danish techno imprint called Echocord—well, techno-ish and definitely dubby; many tracks have a half-tempo feel, perfect for mixing with the more thoughtful end of dubstep. With that wonderful warmth/chill of dawn soundsystem feel, it's techno as The Orb used to make it; in fact, **Thomas Fehlmann**'s on the label along with **Seidemann**, **Dub Surgeon**, **Anders Illar**, and **Fenin**—for those that understand the dancefloor potential of Rhythm and Sound. It's distributed by the mighty Kompakt, so if you see Kompakt records in your local shop, ask 'em to carry Echocord. Euro-hyphy dub.

Next month: The world's first democratic dubstep label!

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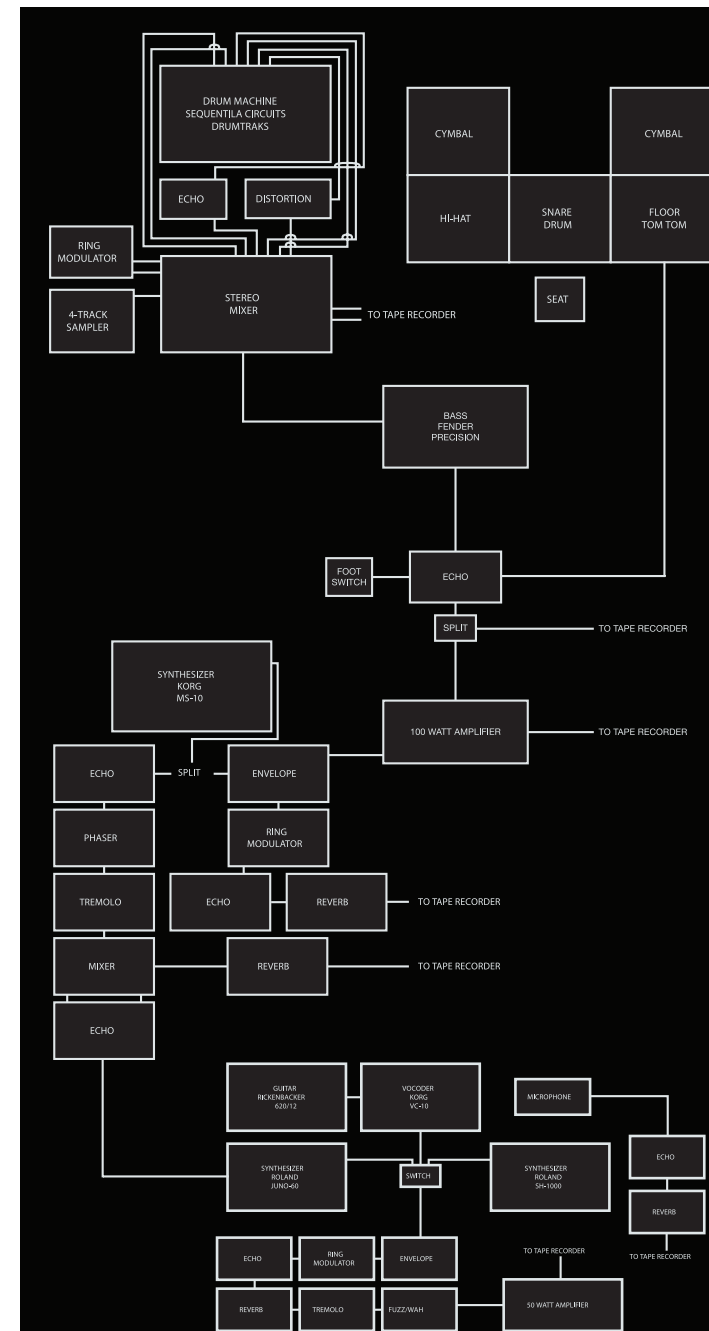
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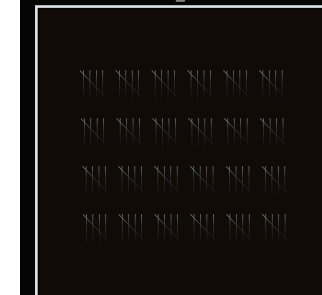


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Joey Youngman



Jimster

Old school aesthetics continue to reign, keeping this season's focus squarely on the dancefloor vibe, which just means more fun and exciting tunes across the board.

One of the leaders of the pack is **Ben Watt**'s Buzzin' Fly label, which blasts out of fall's starting gates with a new single by **Jamie "Jimster" Odell**. Hot off the heels of his latest full-length, Odell's *Square Up 12* is a suite of aquatic-filtered Rhodes chords, semi-speed garage-styled bass, and tight, punchy percussion. As if it weren't set to be massive already, Watts enlisted California's truest tech-house master **John Tejada** for the remix. Following close behind will be **Rocco**'s "Roots 4 Acid" single, which is sure to have 303 fans hopping in anticipation.

Elsewhere in the UK, **Grant Nelson** unleashes another epic for those that like it deep but energetic. "Spellbound" is a one-sided promo-only release on Nelson's own Swing City imprint. The main element here is an array of dramatically orchestrated keys, which truly take piano house to another level.

Over in Teutonic territory, **Dixon**'s Innervations imprint has migrated west from Berlin's Sonar Kollektiv camp to Hamburg-based distribution powerhouse Word and Sound. The inaugural release for this new partnership will be Stefan Goldman's *Sleepy Hollow* EP, a dreamy tech-house affair. Remix duties are handled by label mates Âme, who can't seem to misstep at the moment.

Though **Dennis Ferrer**'s Sferre Records has been quiet while he's at work on his new album and various other projects, the imprint is finally set to hatch a new sub-label called Objektivity. The first release is a collaboration with Baltimore house veteran **Karizma**. **Ferrer & Karizma Ltd** will unleash the "The Cube," much to the dismay of many club owners whose systems won't be prepared for its dark and heavy dub stylings.

For those who can't wait for the long-anticipated debut full-length by Detroit native/NYC transplant **Quentin Harris**, check the first single entitled "Haunted" (Un-Restricted Access). The focus is heavy on the horn section here, so fans of ye olde saxophone take note.

Chicago-based, German-distributed label Still Music has built a name for itself over the past few years as a wellspring of Afro-tinged jazz-house. Teaming up with up NJ producer **Moses Mclean** and vocalist Nedra for their latest release, *Dreamland*. Still ventures deep into vocal territory. **Patchworks**, **DJ 3000**, and **Isoul 8** have all been brought in for mixes, each utilizing the palette of the original parts to craft unique reshapes ranging from deep, driving tech to sultry mid-tempo.

If you're a fan of the West Coast sound, then you're probably familiar with **Joey Youngman**. He and label mates **Bryan Jones**, **Chuck Love**, **Tony Hewitt**, and **The White Collar Criminals** have found a secret method of distilling the bumpy rhythms, catchy edits, and dubby FX that are the core elements of this sound into one quality release after another. At 24, Youngman has already carved a space on the record-store wall for his Fetish and Jackin Tracks labels alongside the likes of Tango, Nightshift, Doubledown, and OM. Keep your ears open for Youngman's *The Captain Strikes Again* EP (Fetish) and the *Schoolyard Shenanigans* EP by Joey's 73-year-old (ummm, so says the website) "uncle" **Mario Fabriani** (Jackin Tracks).



**House Guest Reviews:**  
**Garth**

San Francisco house maven Garth has been holding down the city's scene for 16 years. Since moving to S.F. from London, he's been dedicated to cultivating the West Coast's still-fertile house scene through countless releases and residencies (perhaps his best known being the Wicked and Come Unity parties). In keeping with that ethos, he just released the mix CD, *Unleash the Hound*, featuring tracks by left-coasters Charles Spencer, Nectar, and Stranger Bay. And he mixed it the old-fashioned way: two turntables, a crateful of vinyl, and a mixer—no edits. Also forthcoming on his own Grayhound label is a remix single of Michoacan's 2004 record "2 Bullets," featuring rerubs by Garth, his DJ partner-in-crime Jenö, The Glimmers, and nu-disco king Harvey. And next up for Garth is a Glimmers remix for their Diskomo label. Here's what he's playing at his new monthly, Back 2 Back. **Aaron Ashley** [www.grayhound.net](http://www.grayhound.net)

**VARIOUS**  
**CONFUZED DISCO SAMPLER: A RETROSPECTIVE OF ITALIAN RECORDS**  
Mantra Vibes/US/12

This one features two ridiculously savage reworkings of mid-'80s Italian cuts: Kirlian Camera's "Blue Room" and A.I.M.'s "Thailand Seeds." Monster productions of glitchy techno future-funk: music from outer space to obliterate the human race... or at least give your town's best soundsystem a run for its money. *Garth*

**QUIET VILLAGE**  
**CIRCUS OF HORROR**  
Whatever We Want/US/12

The only label with balls enough to sponsor Thom and Harv's freestyle lunacy project, Map of Africa, has also managed to unearth this outfit of cosmic rock misfits. From Brighton, England, Quiet Village seems to survive rather well on a diet of otherworldly music inspired by spaghetti westerns and acid rock... whatever the fuck they want, basically. *Garth*

**VARIOUS**  
**PERMANENT VACATION SAMPLER**  
Permanent Vacation/GER/CD

A wet dream for vinyl addicts of the midtempo disco persuasion. Ilya Santana's "Leather Black Pants After Midnight" and Maurice Fulton's remix of Ost & Kjex's "Have You Seen the Moon in Dallas" may have been enough, but they included Double's "Woman of the World" from 1983 and Tommy Seebach's 1979 space epic "Bobbie Sex" to make damn sure you buy one. What you waitin' for? *Garth*

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## After Silence By Martin De Leon II

THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Caroline



Tokyo Police Club

Old ideas die slowly. But new records, from psych-rap to laptop jazz to indie rock, are tiny philosophies that sustain after the needle has stopped. Nostalgia is rarely good for music nerds, but the warmth of knowing that undiscovered beauty and fat beats are out there is enough.

Canada is still popping out the best indie rock today (have you heard **Sunset Rubdown** yet?). Toronto band **Tokyo Police Club's** debut EP, *A Lesson in Crime* (Paper Bag), is both effortless and melodically sugary. Seven songs of noisy, well-crafted rock, like Modest Mouse but more futuristic.

Yet, rock is still historical. Check Australia's **Van She**, who smoosh French house, '80s post-punk, and gritty Nirvana-esque riffs together on their self-titled five-song EP on Modular Records. "Kelly" is New Order all over again, with paralyzing synthesizers and third-grade lyrics. I can't stop listening.

It's the same with **Caroline**, whose CocoRosie-lite single, "Sunrise" (Temporary Residence), makes beautiful use of microbeats and piano washes. Then there's L.A.'s **Logreybeam** (on Type), who uses dark pianos and cut-up minimalist melodies (like Murcof) to create a terrific remix. **DJ Poignant** makes it a dancefloor romp on his dirty reworking.

Slowing it down is Miami's **Feathers**, who makes post-rock for the Playstation 3 crowd. Their second of three EPs, *Synchromy* (Hometapes), is a brilliant collection recorded by Tortoise wiz John McEntire. Like Broadcast without a singer, the trio crafts thoughtful ("Tone Poem") and geeky ("Iron Mountain") compositions.

Philly's **A Sunny Day in Glasgow** is dreamy. Their *The Sunniest Day Ever* EP is both creepy and awe-inspiring, with tracks like "C'Mon," where atonal My Bloody Valentine noise rubs up against melodic pop. The quartet masters the clouds like no other.

Those who study percussion like it was a subject at MIT will find *Congs for Brums* (Free Porcupine Society), by multi-band member **Ches Smith**, terrific. Having played with everyone from Pauline Oliveros to Xiu Xiu, this record of dark compositions that use only drums and scraggly percussion makes "goth" sound smart again.

Not getting enough dirty beats with your cereal? **Ratatat** goes pop on the 12" from the duo's latest album, *Classics* (XL). "Wildcat" is a cut-up, classic rock mess that gets beaten up by 32-bit synths. Flip it and hear the thugged-out "Swisha" from two white dudes from Crown Heights.

Terry Riley fans, put down your dusty copies of *In C* because Portland's **Tunnels** is here. The electronic duo sounds like they should have been around in the '60s with those room-sized Harvard synthesizers. They're unsigned and working on upcoming material, but you can find them at [www.myspace.com/sonictunnels](http://www.myspace.com/sonictunnels).

**King Kong Ding Dong** is why rock still matters. Trashy beats, avant-garde melodies, and harmonicas—all can be found on their awesome self-titled debut EP. The unsigned quartet goes from Sonic Youth ("Heya") to Broadcast ("Missing Tooth") in seconds.

Former DNA member and No Wave legend Ikue Mori plays the laptop like John Coltrane. **Mephista** is the trio of drummer Susie Ibarra, French pianist Sylvie Couvoisier, and Mori. Their rare performance of messy electronics, geometric drumming, and dizzyingly complex piano at New York's Tonic made listening to their album *Black Narcissus* (Tzadik) even better. You don't need glossy beats to shine—just new ideas.



## Bubble Metropolis by Kit Clayton

TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Kit Clayton



Rhythm and Sound

On a recent trip to the beautiful city of Vancouver, British Columbia, I found **Tanya Pea's** *Handcut Icecubes* EP (The Record Company) wedged between the majestic rock of the Cascades and the urban-futurism of the city center. One part ambient, the other straight-ahead techno, this is music that shifts under the boredom of so-called "intelligent dance music," and shakes like tectonic plates.

While I've got you shakin', check out "Shake Me" (Coco Machete/OM), the latest anthem from the mind of San Francisco's **Landshark**. This is distorted industrial/techno with a Teutonic edge to it that adds yet another facet to West Coast techno. And yes, I really did just review an OM record in this techno column.

Mysterious new Italian label Titbit has just released the *Tibite* EP from **D.A.T.A.**, a four-track jack into the mind of Giancarlo Lanza. I was hipped to this record by Aeosteric's **Brett Johnson**, who also offers up a solid remix on the single. My favorite track is "Casio Loves Jen," which features music made on the rare Italian synthesizer, the Jen SX-2000.

Always up for tooling around on weird synths is **Kit Clayton**. He's remixed **Capracaba's** "Body" (Soul Jazz), which, to be totally honest, sounds a lot like **Gold Chains** rapping like he's just joined a Nitzer Ebb cover band. It's hard, acid-crunk music to get thizzical to.

**Adam Beyer** returns with an absolutely banging release on the Cocoon label. But would you expect anything less from this guy? "Stereotypes" brings the energy and funk, and is decidedly maximal in effort. He brings a lot of extra tension into the mix by adding long crescendos of white noise, to fantastic effect. Rock this one strictly at peak time!

Another peak-time thriller is the new **Rhythm & Sound** release "Poor People Must Work" b/w "See Mi" (Burial Mix). It's a stripped-down and

dubby techno flash-out. The Carl Craig remix is less razzle, all dazzle and Basic Channel themselves hold it down rather nicely on the b-side, too.

Also on the atmospheric techno tip is Berlin's **Touane**. His impressive *Sprea Baptism* EP (Persona) starts out with a 108-bpm self-titled midtempo burner. Those kinds of 4/4 jams are some of my favorite in dance music, and Touane fails to disappoint here. His simmering Border Community-esque psychedelic techno jams are definitely something to keep an eye out for.

On the electro-techno tip, it's **Tomcraft & Jimmy Pop's** "Broadword Calling Danny Boy" 12" on Kosmo. A little too commercial dance-radio-sounding for me, but I can see how some would be stoked about this release; it's very well-produced. Go straight to the b-side's grooving remix by Gregory Thresher for max satisfaction.

Would this column be complete without a nod to my minimalist friends? As we like to say out west, "Hellz no!" **Uli Kunkel's** *Singing With Rod* EP (Kalimari) isn't just minimal; it's some of the oddest sparse-beat techno I've heard in a while. I think the track "Drug Pig" is some kind of reference to drug-sniffing swine, but I'm not sure.

Minimal techno is getting more and more psychedelic as time progresses, and Montreal's **Pheek** is happy to follow suit. (The direct influence of Hawtin and Villalobos, perhaps?) *Lignes Et Directions*, Pheek's debut 12" on his own Archipel label, is a bizarre minimal funk ride into the hard side. "5 AM (Little Surprise)" and "Anxiété en Élasto-o-rama" are the most dance-floor rockable. Are those pops on the record, or is my needle just trippin' out?

# HUGS AND/OR DRUGS

**JESSICA BAILIFF** feels like home krank097 OUT NOW  
 "...fragile around the edges sometimes, like newly emerged moths, or fragments of dream memory upon waking." — *Dream Magazine*

**CHRIS HERBERT** mezzotint krank101 OUT NOW  
 "Utterly quiet, with a pulse-soothing beat, it takes several listens to reveal itself, like a dark room slowly brought into focus." — *Disquiet*

**CHRISTINA CARTER** electrice krank103 OUT NOW  
 "She is a singular and important figure inside the context of our era's music, creating rich, mysterious and highly individual carpets for all of us to sail away on." — *The Wire*.  
 Watch for Christina's guest appearance on DJ Shadow's "The Outsider"

**BENOÎT PIOULARD** précis krank098 10.16.06  
 "Crystalline folk-pop teeming with fragile vocals, acoustic guitars, electronics, and percussion in a hazy shoegaze style that's... more than a little easy to fall in love with" — *Textura*

**TIM HECKER** harmony in ultraviolet krank102 10.16.06  
 "...chisels a pristine din out of soot-clogged guitar distortion and symphonics that litter from the heavens." — *XLR8R*

**BODUF SONGS** lion devours the sun krank099 10.30.06

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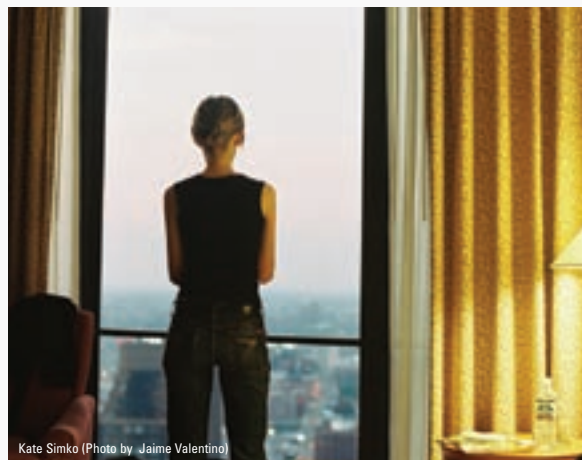
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## Lucky 13 by Toph One

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at [www.fabric8.com/redwine](http://www.fabric8.com/redwine). Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.



Kate Simko (Photo by Jaime Valentino)



Zeb and Nickodemus



Teeko

I'm not real sure how I ended up with a 6' 5" Peruvian roommate, but suddenly, there was Omar on the couch, sipping my beer. Dude was a contractor, but he was always dressed for brunch at Zuni Cafe on Market Street. I tried telling him, "In America, contractors wear Ben Davis and drink boilermakers in the Sunset," but he just kept on being infectiously happy and drinking wine all night long. And so all was well until baseball season ended, it got cold, and all I wanted was to be alone and play The Motels for my local murder of crows. *Only the lonely can play...*

### 1. IL SQUAD "THE FINEST"

Il Records/US/12  
This might be the "New Bay" mobb sound, but I've been writing on buses with some of these cats for more than 20 years. Crazy hard beats by Ink1 and Logic, with lyrics spit by my mang Eddie-K, Roc Vegas, and crew. The first single, "Rock'n With the Best," is already making noise in the Bay.

### 2. ZEB "STOP THE EARTH, I WANNA GET OFF #1"

Wonderwheel/US/12EP  
Dancefloor veteran Zeb drops the Afro-disco bombs in a preview of his upcoming CD. In fact, "Afro Disco" hasn't left my bag since I first dropped it on a packed crowd at an Anon Salon underground. I thought the floor was gonna collapse!

### 3. THE EARL "REMIX VOL. 5"

Footlong/US/12  
The Earl lays his signature butter styles underneath Q-Tip's "For the Nasty" and Floetry's "Supastar," with the latter coming out particularly warm and lovely. Plus a couple slamming bonus beats, so pick up two copies. Why isn't this guy big-time?

### 4. TEEKO MY SOUND STATION

indie/US/CD  
The mighty 4OneFunk DJs just keep blowing minds with their work behind the decks and in the studio, and now this kid Teeko busts out with this amazing disc of original, jazz-infused beat building and wrist freakery. This is what it would sound like if Eddie Harris joined Live Human.

### 5. ZION I & THE GROUCH "HEROES IN THE CITY OF DOPE"

OM-Live Up/US/12  
Zion I teams up with the Living Legends' Grouch for a heavyweight tour of Cali hip-hop. The upcoming single features Chali2na on "Too Much" and the soulful "Make U Fly" with Esthero on the flip. But peep the full-length: "Current Affairs" and "SMACK" are straight Oaktown funk from Amp Live, while The Clash pops up on the ragga-styled "Kickin It."

### 6. HONEYCUT THE DAY I TURNED TO GLASS

Quannum/US/CD  
These guys sound equally at home at a balls-out gig at the Rickshaw Stop or bubbling out of a high-end shoe shop in Hayes Valley. From the '60s pop of "Crowded Avenue" to the Fleetwood Mac daydreams of "Butter Room," these are exquisitely crafted songs from this Berkeley trio, fronted by crooner Bart Davenport.

### 7. KATE SIMKO STRUMM EP

Kupei Musika/US/12  
Chicago always gives it up, and this summer's visit there was no exception. And now there's Miss Simko with her dub-heavy "Machine War." Will the goodness never end?

### 8. COUNT BASS D ACT YOUR WAIST SIZE

FatBeats/US/CD  
One of the original indie rapper/producers, Bass D could be the

Schoolly D of Nashville. He has a dark, cinematic sound, a narrative vocal style, and is endlessly inventive in his music. Maybe not for the clubs, but definitely worth a listen.

### 9. GREGORIO HOWE Y COMPADRES SALSA BLANCO

Wide Hive/US/CD  
This album features some serious players joining Greg Howe. There's Danillo Paiz (Ray Baretto's band) on congas, New Yorican Ray Martinez on bongos and timbales, and even Black Jazz guitarist Calvin Keys. You can bet "Bajo Tierra" and "Fuego En La Playa" will get played at the RedWine Social.

### 10. CLEVELAND STEAMERS TREASURE CHEST

indie/US/CD  
When a vanload of lil' bastards from Portland unloads at your spot, be afraid. When they're named after a particularly vulgar sexual deviance, it can only get worse. But dudes have got skills!

### 11. MSTRKRFT THE LOOKS

Last Gang/CAN/CD  
God bless those Canadians: Now they're making electro!

### 12. MOTHSPYEROS SUENO ROJO

LunaticWorks/US/CD  
This is a close runner-up to my "warm fuzzy" record of the year (#1 is last summer's "Everybody Daylight" by Brightblack Morning Light), and there are some blissful moments here, for sure.

### LUCKY 13. BICYCLE FILM FESTIVAL

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## VIS-ED: BRIAN MCCARTY

A photographer gets his hands dirty in the “adult vinyl” world.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST IMAGES: BRIAN MCCARTY

Brian McCarty spends a lot of time on his knees. Get your mind out of the gutter, perv—he’s just taking photos. Then again, these aren’t just any portraits; they’re painstaking, crisp, beautifully colored fairytales featuring very small, very still protagonists.

McCarty’s work gives context and humor to the often lifeless world of collectible vinyl and plush. He’s re-imagined Toren Orzeck’s Furilla toy running wild through the desert, James Jarvis’ cartoon hooligans Harvey and Jubs about to cause trouble outside the Wonder Bread factory, and set Santa Inoue’s ruffneck Merra figurine (from the Tokyo Tribes series) against the graffiti-emblazoned background of L.A.’s abandoned Red Line subway tunnel.

“The majority of the time I start with the toy and imagine where they would go, and what they would do,” writes McCarty from his home in West Hollywood. “On other projects I’ll begin with a narrative concept and seek out characters to illustrate it.” A project with Rockstar Games’ *Vice City* figurines, for example, demanded shooting in Miami’s seedier neighborhoods, while posing Biddies characters breakdancing and standing outside of strip clubs was his own idea.

McCarty, who admires photographer Robert Frank and likes to work with everything from Paul Simon to Panjabi MC playing in the background, says that equipment is relatively unimportant compared to inspiration. “[The camera] is really just there to record what you see,” he says.

[www.mccartyphotoworks.com](http://www.mccartyphotoworks.com)

To purchase the *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* Kubrick box set, please go to [www.rockstargames.com/warehouse](http://www.rockstargames.com/warehouse).

RIGHT: *Possessed*







**Describe the moment when you realized that you should shoot toys.**

Honestly, I always thought I should shoot toys. About the time I was supposed to grow up and stop playing with them, toys transitioned into the focus of my early, fumbling experiments with photography.

But if you're looking for the a-ha "Take On Me" moment, it probably came as a freshman at Parsons [School of Design]. I had started moving away from toys and had begun photographing all the stuff I thought real photographers shot—landscapes, fashion, documentary—and none of it was exciting me. I randomly shot this super-rough miniseries with a plastic Shriners figure that followed the Talking Heads song "Mr. Jones." It was so much fun and felt so right in contrast to what I was *supposed* to do, that it sealed the deal. I knew that's all I wanted to shoot.

**Are any of the toys "difficult"?**

[It's] so tempting to crack jokes, but some of them really are. The biggest challenge I face is scale and perspective—working with anything under four inches tall is an extreme challenge. I've got-

ten pretty good at overcoming it, but shot choices are severely limited.

**Of the photos seen here, which was the most complicated to stage?**

Tough one—a lot of them were very complex. Top choice would probably be the photo of Master Shake from *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*. In the shot, he's floating in the middle of the pool at the Las Vegas Palms Casino with the lovely "Palms Girls" in the background.

For starters, the toy doesn't float—at least not upright. Even if it did, the wind gusting to 30mph kinda made that moot. Since this was the one and only time I had access to the pool, we rigged up this crazy fishing line system. Next came time to get Ruth and Ryan (the Palms Girls) sorted out. I could see they just weren't digging on the prospect of climbing into the pool for some pale loser with a toy, so I told them to just laugh their asses off at Shake and me. The motivation perhaps came too easy for them.

Between the crazy wind that kept messing up their hair, blowing away the reflectors, and making Shake look like the SS

Minnow, I managed to get a shot I'm very happy with.

**How old are you?**

It freaks me out that I still remember sixth graders as being *soooo* old. Being 28 would have just blown my little mind; the fact I'm 32, even more so.

Random side story that relates to my age: When I was at Parsons I got hold of Douglas Coupland's fax number through a friend at his publishing company. If memory serves, this was around the time when his second book was about to come out. I faxed him a few times, and the guy was nice enough to reply to the random fanboy that I was. One of things he said really stuck with me. He talked about how happy he was to be through his 20s, and that he knew far better who he was at 32. Being there now, I gotta agree with the guy.

**What was the first toy you ever really loved?**

A stuffed Snoopy. Still got him, complete with a bunch of his outfits. The pilot one rules all.

**What do you do when you're feeling uninspired?**

Music is a really, really big thing for me. And not to be all brainy and shit, but I'm a closet fan of a number of poets. There's a great Orson Welles quote that I like a lot: "A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet."

**There is a lot of debate over how long the limited-edition toy market can continue, given how expensive toys are getting and their limited use (outside of collecting). Do you feel the market is getting saturated?**

Well, you have to remember that you're talking to a guy that's been photographing toys for over 15 years. As far as I'm concerned, toys are an artistic genre that is only starting to peek its head aboveground. Because this is so new, or at least the emergence is, there will be periods of readjustment where the medium will be forced to refocus and redefine itself. The trends that are happening now in the marketplace may come and go, but artists will continue expressing their vision through toys regardless.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:**

*Lost Face*

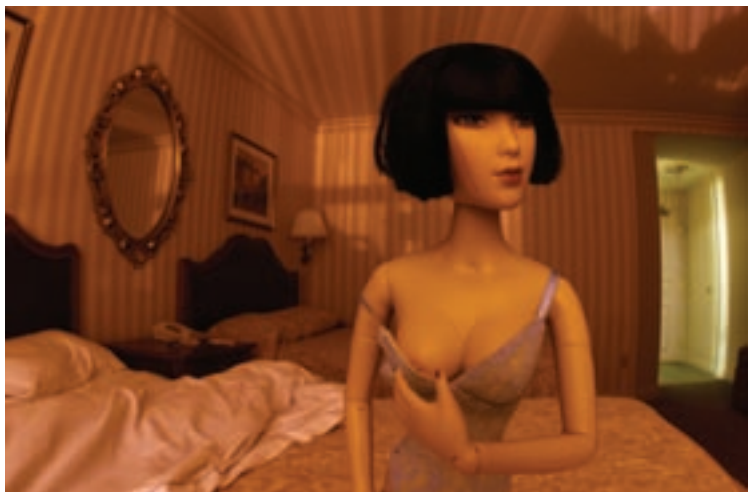
**ABOVE (clockwise from top):**

*Bunny Van*

*Master Shake (from Aqua Teen Hunger Force)*

*Cheez-It*





**What sorts of things do you think will help keep the toy business alive?**

If we're just talking about the collector market, manufacturers and artists could do well looking at comics and baseball cards. Both tanked for a while after trying to artificially force the collectability. There is some of that already happening in the toy scene with people going a little crazy with colorways and overproduction of platform toys.

I gotta say that Rockstar did it right with the *GTA* figures. It's pretty ballsy for them to go with super-small runs and no paint variations. They're not trying to turn a quick buck or capitalize on some fad. They are supporting the growth

of the genre. Frankly, it's going to take more of that sort of thinking to really keep this alive. The Rockstar Games of the world have the potential to be the Medicis of the toy renaissance. Artists such as myself will always continue to explore the medium, but it needs benefactors to be seen.

**What is your advice for young photographers?**

Shoot whatever the hell you want and just keep doing it. Eventually you'll find an audience.

**THIS PAGE (clockwise from top):**

*They're Late*  
*Greetings from Vice City* featuring Tommy Vercetti and Candy Suxx © 2006 McCarty Photoworks and Rockstar Games  
*Hotel Room*

**POSTER:**  
*The Bright Lights of Vice City*  
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 Exclusive for *XLR8R* Vis-Ed

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